

To report on the weight loss achieved in 12 weeks by 432 super-morbidly obese patients on the LighterLife Total VLCD weight-loss programme in 2009; a retrospective study

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Average weight loss for 432 patients with BMI≥50 was 23.5kg (3st 10lb) in 12 weeks

Introduction

The super-morbidly obese patient (BMI≥50) represents a significant challenge in terms of weight loss and long-term weight management.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is an independent organisation evaluating the efficacy of health treatment in England and Wales. It recommends bariatric surgery as the first-line treatment for these patients, where surgical intervention is appropriate. The rationale is that this patient group is in most urgent need of rapid weight reduction, yet has difficulties in achieving this by pharmacological agents or calorie-deficit diets.

LighterLife Total is a commercial weight-management programme for patients with BMI≥30. Weight loss is achieved with a nutritionally complete VLCD, alongside a behavioural-modification programme developed for weight management, using transactional analysis and cognitive behavioural therapy techniques (TCBT) in small, single-sex, weekly groups.

The abstinence from conventional food, coupled with the group work, helps patients to create a reflective space in which they can explore the reasons for their overeating and develop new practical and psychological strategies for successful weight management in the future.

Following weight loss, an ongoing weight-maintenance programme helps patients reintroduce a full range of conventional food and continue to implement healthy lifestyle changes, to increase the likelihood of weight management, thus reducing the risk of co-morbidities.

Aim

To determine mean weight loss and BMI reduction for 432 super-morbidly obese patients (BMI≥50) following 12 weeks' participation in the LighterLife Total VLCD from January to August 2009.

Method

Following medical screening for suitability, patients commenced the LighterLife Total VLCD, attended a weekly group session, were weighed weekly and the ongoing presence of ketosis was confirmed using urinary Ketostix by their LighterLife weight-management counsellors.

The VLCD supplied complete nutrition during weight loss and reduced the distractions of choice around food, providing the clarity of explicit boundaries.

LighterLife Total VLCD	Amount per day
Energy	550 kcal (mean)
Protein	≥50g
Carbohydrate	≥50g
Fats	15.9g (mean)
Vitamins and minerals	≥100% (RDA)

Results

Time on VLCD	Mean cumulative weight loss	Mean % weight loss	Mean cumulative BMI reduction
4 weeks	11.6kg (1st 12lb)	7.7%	4.2
8 weeks	18.2kg (2st 12lb)	12.1%	6.6
12 weeks	23.5kg (3st 10lb)	15.6%	8.5

A sample of 432 super-morbidly obese patients with mean start weight of 150.4kg (23st 9lb) and mean start BMI of 54.9 lost a mean 23.5kg (3st 10lb). This is a mean BMI reduction of 8.5 and a mean weight loss in excess of 15% of their body weight in 12 weeks on the LighterLife Total VLCD.



Featured client lost 76.2kg (12st) in 18½ months

Conclusion

- The LighterLife Total VLCD enables super-morbidly obese patients to lose weight quickly and safely.
- The significant weight loss will improve health outcomes by reducing the risk of weight-related co-morbidities.
- The group support and behavioural-modification work facilitated in the groups may be factors in maintaining compliance with the LighterLife Total VLCD.
- We will report on further weight loss and weight maintenance in due course.

Key words: super-morbidly obese, significant weight loss, very-low-calorie diet (VLCD), behavioural modification, LighterLife