

The impact of social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic on physical and mental health: the lived experience of adolescents with obesity and their caregivers.

G. Pietrabissa, C. Volpi 1, M. Bottacchi, V. Bertuzzi, A. Guerrini Usubini, H. Löffler-Stastka, T. Prevendar, G. Rapelli, R. Cattivelli, G. Castelnuovo, E. Molinari, A. Sartorio

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Adolescence is a complex developmental phase, made more complex by obesity and the social isolation imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The literature related to the impact of social isolation on obesity self-management in adolescents is scant and inconsistent. This paper describes the phenomenon from the perspectives of a sample of adolescents with obesity enrolled in an inpatients' multidisciplinary rehabilitation program for weight-loss and their caregivers, and its impact on different life domains. Individual semi-structured ad hoc interviews were conducted with 10 adolescent-caregiver dyads, and narratives were qualitatively investigated using an interpretative phenomenology approach to data. Twenty participants took part in the study. The major themes that emerged from this study fall into five basic categories: (1) COVID-19 as an opportunity to reconsider what makes a good life; (2) Persistence in life; (3) Empowering relationship; (4) Daily routine in quarantine; (5) Lives on hold. Understandings drawn from this study may assist health care professionals in providing holistic support, and guidance to adolescents with weight-related issues and their caregivers who experience social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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