

INTERVENT News You Can Use

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Invited Commentary

Title of Publication: Clinical Effectiveness of Lifestyle Management Programs:
Importance of the Class Effect Paradox

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Opinion Statement:

It is well appreciated in pharmacotherapy that all drugs belonging to the same class of agents are not necessarily equally safe or effective. Because of this so-called “class effect paradox,” pharmaceutical companies must do extensive research to prove the safety and efficacy of a new drug before introducing it into the market, even if it belongs to a well-established class of medications. Like pharmaceutical agents, lifestyle management interventions can be organized into classes. This commentary examines the rationale for, and importance of, considering the class effect paradox when balancing the need for new and innovative lifestyle management programs with the need for evidence-based interventions for proven outcomes. In view of the fact that all lifestyle management programs within a specific broad intervention class do not necessarily result in clinical benefit, it is recommended that any new approach should not be widely implemented until it has been shown to be effective as evidenced by results of clinical studies published in peer-reviewed journals.

How You Can Use These Results:

- Physicians/other healthcare providers and employers/other purchasers of lifestyle management programs should:
 - Recognize that all lifestyle management programs that address the same behavior(s) may not necessarily result in similar clinical benefits and may not be interchangeable.
 - Select lifestyle management programs that have been proven effective in peer-reviewed published clinical trials.
 - Recognize that low-intensity approaches to counseling related to lifestyle management are unlikely to be of much benefit to most people/patients. Higher-intensity counseling interventions are most likely to produce improved physiological outcomes.

-Consider the class effect paradox when developing and implementing lifestyle-related measures of quality of medical care for the purpose of quality improvement and accountability.

- Providers of lifestyle management programs should:
Conduct research to document the clinical effectiveness of new programs before implementing them on a wide-scale basis.
- Third-party payers should:
Cover the costs of evidence-based programs that have been shown to be effective in peer-reviewed published clinical trials.