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< The 8th Asia-Oceania Conference on Obesity (AOCO 2015)>
Nagoya Declaration 2015

[Body text]

We hereby propose a concept for international recognition of a pathological state (obesity disease) in which a person suffers health problems caused by or related to obesity thus making weight loss clinically desirable and requiring treatment as a disease entity. Under this concept/definition, treating obesity accompanied by health problems represents a target for therapeutic medicine, where weight loss may lead to improvements in such health problems. This is differentiated from obesity not accompanied by health problems which represents a risk factor for a variety of diseases that may occur in the future and therefore remains a target for preventive medicine.

[Rationale]

Body mass index (BMI) is used to assess the presence of obesity. Debate has so far centered on whether obesity should be classified as a risk factor or as a disease. It has become clear, however, that placing all obesity cases in the same category is not scientifically justifiable. As a result of progress in diverse studies being implemented in various countries and regions worldwide, a body of knowledge is accumulating to demonstrate the clinical usefulness of differentiating between “obesity disease” (obesity as a disease) and obesity per se. The prevalence of both obesity and “obesity disease” is on the rise. However, it is important, from a clinical management and health economics perspective, to differentiate between those individuals who are candidates for preventive medical interventions and those who require medical treatments, while weight loss through lifestyle modification including diet/exercise therapy represents the cornerstone in either population.

Going forward, the Asia Oceania Association for the Study of Obesity intends to disseminate the concept of “obesity disease” worldwide thereby ensuring that all individuals with “obesity disease” are appropriately treated as well as to promote the development of new treatment modalities and approaches. The Association will also actively deliver the message to society that individuals with obesity, currently not accompanied by health problems, may subsequently be placed at risk of acquiring “obesity disease” due to progression of obesity, excessive visceral fat accumulation, aging, and other factors. In this regard, the Association will focus particular attention on awareness-raising campaigns to promote wide recognition of the clinical usefulness of measuring waist circumference as a simple indicator of visceral fat accumulation among the general population, thus preparing the society for preventive medical interventions.

It is expected that the campaigns outlined above will contribute to increased healthy lifespan, more effective medical resource utilization, and alleviation of the increasing burden of obesity and “obesity disease” on the international community.