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ABSTRACT 100

Validity of Proxy-Reported Weight for Older Adults

Rahul Malhotra¹ MBBS, MD, MPH

Angelique Chan^{1,2} PhD

Truls Østbye^{1,3} MD, PhD

¹ Health Services and Systems Research, Duke-National University of Singapore Graduate Medical School, Singapore

² Sociology, National University of Singapore, Singapore, and

³ Community and Family Medicine, Duke University Medical Centre, Durham, North Carolina, USA

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Background: It is not always possible to obtain self-reported weight for older adults, in particular for those with cognitive impairment/dementia and/or physical impairments, resulting in reliance on proxy respondents. However, to our knowledge, the validity of proxy-reported weight specifically for older adults has not been examined.

Objectives: To assess the proportion of proxy respondents able to provide an estimate of the older adult's weight, validity of proxy-reported weight, and variation in these variables by proxy-older adult relationship. We also assess variation in validity of proxy-reported weight by older adult age, gender, ethnicity and body mass category (based on measured weight and height).

Methods: 458 proxy respondents, responding on behalf of older adults participating in the Singapore Social Isolation, Health and Lifestyles Survey 2009, reported on the weight of the older adult. Measured body weight was available for 136 of such older adults.

Results: Of the 458 proxy respondents, only 222 (48.5%) provided estimates of the older adult's weight, the proportion was relatively higher for child proxy-respondents (52.2%) than for spouse-(43.8%) or other-(42.3%) proxy respondents. Correlation between measured and proxy-reported weight, among older adults who had data on both (n=136), was 0.92. Proxy-respondents, on average, overestimated weight, by 0.56kg. There was systematic variation in the difference between proxy-reported and measured weight by older adult body mass category (overestimation for those underweight and normal weight, and underestimation for those overweight and obese) and by proxy-older adult relationship (child proxy-responders were the most accurate), but not by older adult age, gender and ethnicity.

Conclusions: Proxy respondents, especially children, provide a fairly accurate estimate of the weight of older adults.