

Lack of support and utilization of support services among Male patients post-surgery: The Bariatric Experience Long Term (BELONG II) Study.



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Bariatric Experience Long Term (BELONG I and II) Study



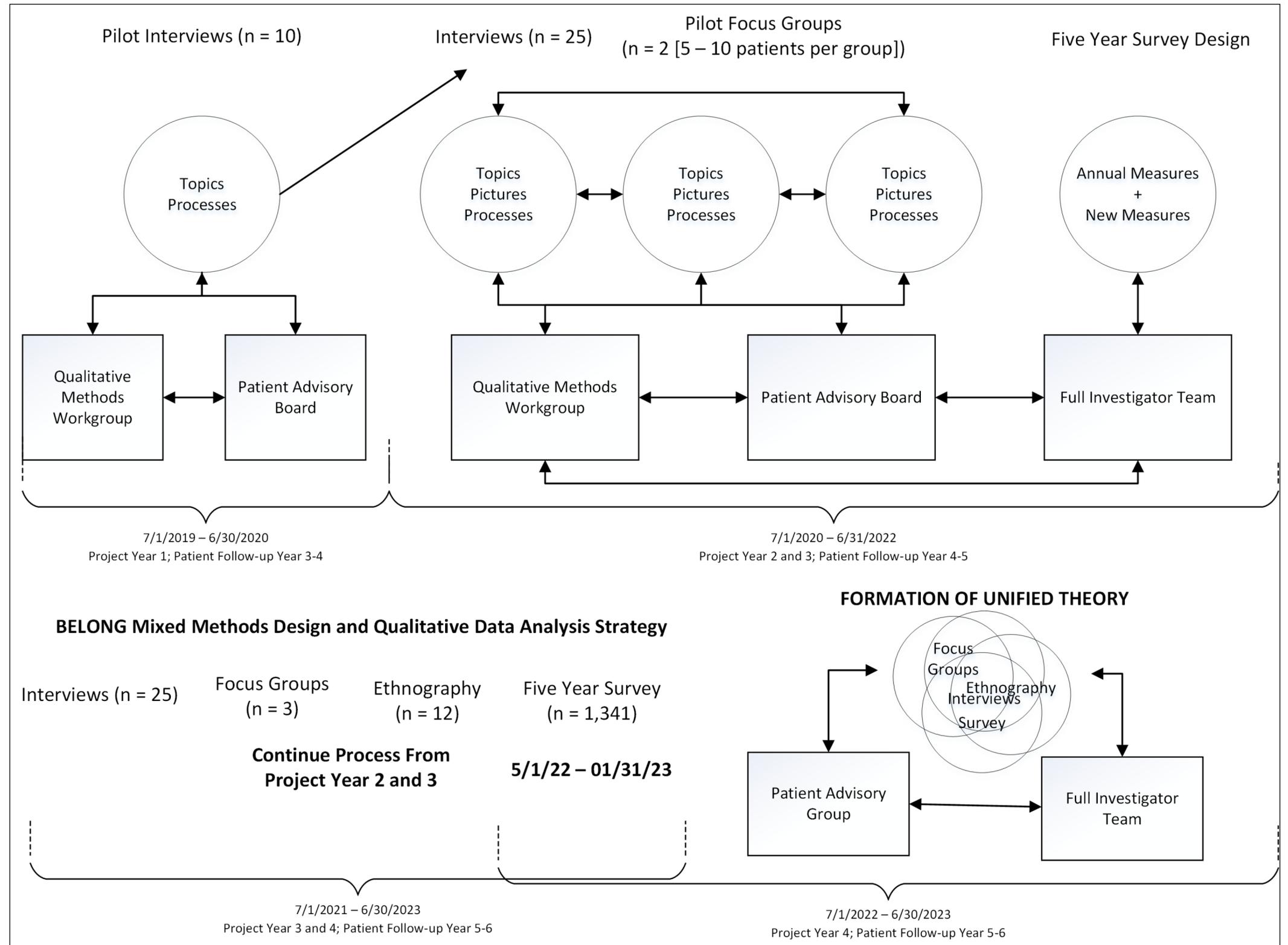
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Belong II

- Belong II: The Bariatric Experience Long Term (BELONG) II for Racial and Ethnic Minority Patients.
- Expands the work of BELONG by incorporating: 1) A focus on weight regain during 3-5 years after surgery; 2) measures shown to contribute to health disparities in severe obesity (vigilant coping style and internalized racism); and 3) innovative qualitative methods (photo-elicitation and ethnography) to understand the patient experience.

BELONG II Study Design: Understanding the Racial/Ethnic Differences in Bariatric Surgical Weight Loss



Background and Purpose

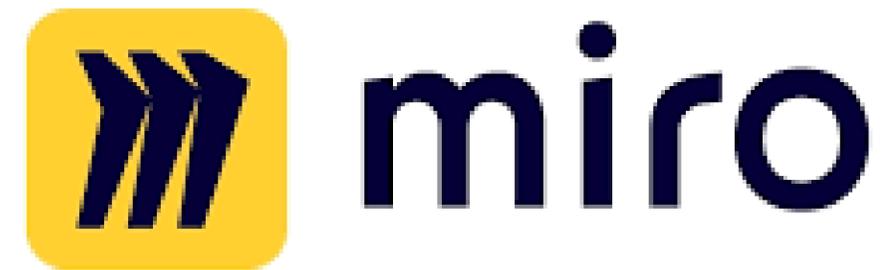
- **Background:** While the prevalence of severe obesity among US adults has been estimated at 11.5% for women and 6.9% for men, only 15-20 % of bariatric surgery patients are male.
- There is limited research regarding surgery experiences of male patients, especially who are 3-5 years post-surgery.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of this presentation is to highlight several important themes that emerged during a qualitative study with a sample of male patients from the Bariatric Experience Long Term (BELONG II) research study.
- BELONG II aims to better understand the experiences of racially and ethnically diverse patients who have undergone weight loss surgery.

Methods

- For this qualitative study our team has collected 60-120 minute, in-depth interviews with 68 patients who received weight loss surgery at Kaiser in southern California.
- The participants were 2-5 years post surgery when we interviewed them.
- The protocol was focused on three domain areas, which included 1) Personal/Family/Social Networks, 2) Healthcare Team/Healthcare System, and 3) Societal Influences.
- In the study, three time points were covered: Pre-surgery, 12-24 months post-surgery, and Present experiences.

Methods

- The interview protocol was developed from the literature and through interaction with our patient stakeholders.
- Interviews were transcribed, analyzed, coded, and were further queried for emergent themes.



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Demographics

- 16 patients participated, and this presentation is focused on 8 males within this group.
- 4 Hispanic males/4 Black males.
- Who did and did not have clinically significant weight loss (which we defined for our study as more than 20% TWL or less than 10% TWL).

Table1	Men		Women		Total
	Hispanic	Black	Hispanic	Black	
<10% TWL	2	2	2	2	8
>20% TWL	2	2	2	2	8
Total	4	4	4	4	16

Results

- Male patients reported not receiving the same level of support post-surgery, as they did prior to surgery.
- They also reported a diminishing level of engagement with their healthcare team/healthcare system, the further out they became from surgery. Male patients also experienced weight re-gain.

Themes

- Support and Lack of Support
- Diversity
- Need for long term follow-up

Support and Lack of Support

- Support of primary doctors
- Healthcare team
- Friends and Family
- Co-workers
- Friends/family/coworkers previous experiences.
- Options Class

Support: Peers/Family

- Well, I had another friend that also wanted to have the surgery. So, she and I basically did it together. (Black Male)
- Family wise, it's just me and my wife and my kids, we're not really that close with our immediate family, so she supported me 100 percent. She was like, this is what you wanna do, I'm here to back you, whatever we gotta do to make this successful, that's what we gone do. (Black Male)

Support: Healthcare Provider/Team

- He [doctor] was real open with us. And I don't know if other people have that relationship with their doctor. But, he was supportive and I think I was fortunate to have him. The people in the class were supportive. Like I said, the staff was supportive. (Hispanic Male)
- Well, my teacher. She was great. I mean she was pretty much the most positive person I had been around for a long time. She kind of encouraged me to, you know, she always told me that I can do this. (Black Male)
- But I think if it wasn't for that course, I would've been lost, not knowing what to do, not being able to use the tools they gave me, which was measure food, don't drink out of a straw. A lot of things which you learn also because they do tell you. (Hispanic Male)

Lack of Support

- But my personal friends were the ones that were actually talking shit. [...] Yeah, like making fun of it, I guess. I mean, I don't know if it's a guy thing. But, yeah, I mean it was always shit-talking about it all the time about that I cheated, why would I do it. (Hispanic Male)
- Well, people always tell you. Okay, certain people did it and one year later they gained all the weight back. You know, you're wasting your time. (Black Male)
- I've had several people say, well, not before the surgery, but after, oh, you took the easy way out and why you just didn't do it, you know working out and doing this and doing that? (Black Male)

Complexities in Support

- Pretty much everybody has been supportive. I had one coworker. I guess she hadn't seen me in like a couple of years, and she just made the statement, "Oh my god, you look so good now." And I was like, "Fuck, I was ugly earlier? Like, what's changed?" She was like, "No, no, no I was just saying, you know, you've lost weight and you just look so much better." I'm like, okay I'm thinking to myself in my head, "Okay, so when I was fat, I was just fucking ugly, huh?" Besides that, that was it. And it's like, people say things, but they don't know what they're saying. They think they're giving you a compliment, but they're actually not. It's like, oh, all right. (Black Male)
- Oh yeah. Sure. Everybody was supportive. I mean you always gonna have those people that's gonna say oh my god, don't lose any more weight. Oh my god, you're getting too skinny. Oh my god, you don't, you always gonna have those people. But overall, I would say 90 percent of the people that I was around, they were very supporting, very. (Black Male)

Diversity

- I would definitely say doctors are doctors. Most of them try to hold themselves to a higher standard, but there are those, you know, that aren't very supportive of you. So, having somebody who has a kind of experience, I'm not saying another Black male, but I'm saying somebody who's ethnic. Whether it was Black, or Asian, or some other non-predominate culture, might have been very helpful. Would give a different perspective. (Black Male)
- You know what? That's a good question because yeah, when they teach you portions and stuff like that, they're just talking about food. And I get it. It's just talking about overall food. But yes, that's probably the only thing I would probably wanna change because I am Mexican at the end of the day. So, we do eat totally different type of foods. So that's the thing where – I don't recall they were ever mentioning anything like Mexican, I guess you could say. (Hispanic Male)

Need for long term follow-up

- Only thing I would say was missing is they would have somebody that came in that had the surgery that has been out for like the different periods of time. (Black Male)
- Like I said, if they had provided a psychologist for an individual going through this procedure and also to continue with them sometime thereafter. Whether it's one or two years or whatever it is. I think that would have been very, very helpful. (Black Male)
- Like I said, if there were more resources that were available either online, or distance learning, or classes I could take in the afternoon or evening. Especially with new information is becoming available each and every day, thinking that new information would be helpful, and so I could adjust my behavior accordingly. That would be the way to go, that's what I would suggest. (Black Male)

Need for long term follow-up

- Yeah, I understand there's a lot of patients, probably not up to this point, the five year, but, maybe the two or even the three-year because I think I'm at the five-year...you probably hear it, but I think there's probably people that probably need that. If they needed the help to do the journey, I'm pretty sure they need the help to stay on the journey. (Hispanic Male)
- I say just be more supportive after. (Hispanic Male)
- In the beginning, like a said, when [xxNAMExx] was calling me and I just thought, "Oh, yeah," I just thought it was gonna be like this through your whole journey. But, after her time was done, that was it. (Hispanic Male)
- It's funny how gaining weight can be so easy to do. And before you know it, boom, I'm back at it. I'm not as heavy as I was before, but I'm trying to catch up sometimes, and I'm not eating as much, so I don't know. The first two years was good. And after that, it seemed like it started getting out of control. (Black Male)

Conclusion

- There is a need for engaging male patients in support services after surgery, especially when they are 3-5 years out from surgery, to ensure they receive adequate assistance in maintaining health and achieving optimal success long-term.
- This support is multifaceted and may include Personal/Family/Social Networks, Healthcare Team/Healthcare System, and Societal Influences.
- These results are preliminary and further analysis will be conducted to consider sub-group comparisons across gender and race/ethnicity.

Thank You!

Questions & Discussion



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