

Abstract

Final Leadership Project LEND 2022-2023

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TITLE: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Weight in Children and Youth with Spina Bifida.

PURPOSE: To describe the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions on weight, in particular increases in BMI, in children and youth with Spina Bifida.

BACKGROUND: Spina Bifida, a neural tube defect, is one of the most common congenital conditions. It causes lower body muscle weakness or paralysis and may involve bladder or bowel impairment. Previous research looking at weight status in children with Spina Bifida indicates that this population is at an increased risk for being overweight or obese due to limited mobility and psychosocial and socioeconomic barriers (McPherson et al., 2013) Research on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on weight status in children indicates that BMI z-scores increased from pre to post pandemic (Weaver et al., 2021). Additionally, children with physical and intellectual disabilities had a decline in physical activity levels and psychological wellbeing during the Covid-19 lockdown (Theis et al., 2021). Little research has been done on the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on weight status in children with Spina Bifida.

METHODS: Retrospective chart reviews were conducted on all patients with Spina Bifida between the ages of 9 to 18 seen in the Spina Bifida clinic at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (n=256). Data was collected from three time points: pre pandemic (prior to September 2019), lockdown (March 2020), and post-lockdown (January 2022). Variables collected include demographic and clinical information, including height, weight, lab values. Descriptive statistics, paired t tests, and regression analysis will be utilized.

CLINICAL RELEVANCE: This retrospective chart review aims to contribute to improvements in the care and treatment of children and adolescents with Spina Bifida.