

## INTRODUCTION

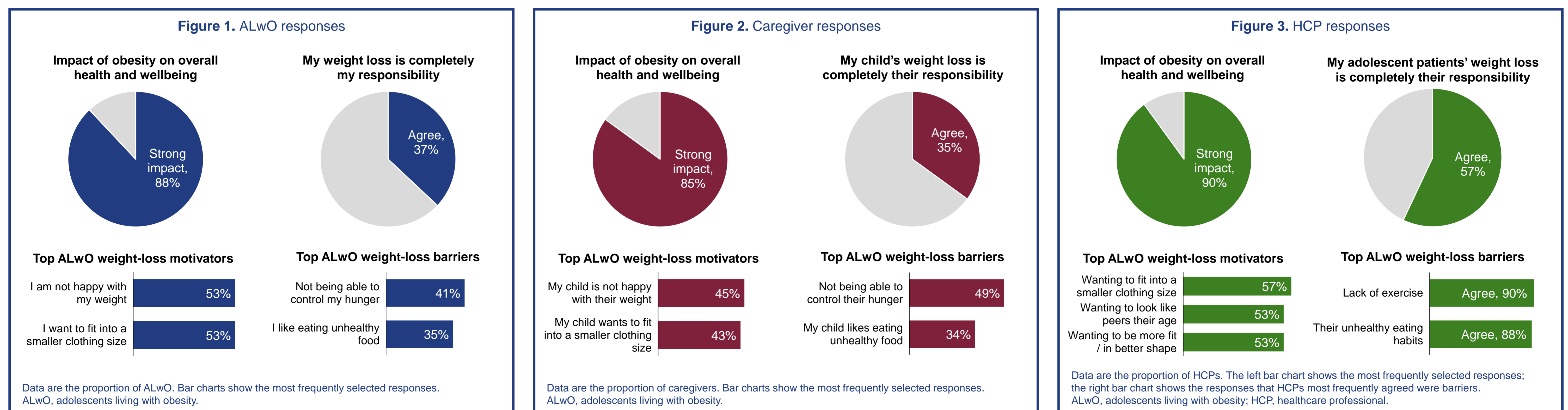
- In 2016, it was estimated that 17.4% of children/adolescents (aged 5–19) in Saudi Arabia were living with obesity<sup>1</sup>; this is expected to increase to 24% by 2030.<sup>2</sup>
- However, little is known regarding the experiences of adolescents living with obesity (ALwO), their caregivers and the healthcare professionals (HCPs) who treat them.
- The global, survey-based ACTION Teens study (NCT05013359) aimed to identify perceptions, attitudes, behaviours and barriers to effective obesity care among ALwO, caregivers of ALwO and HCPs from 10 countries, including Saudi Arabia.<sup>3</sup>
- Global data have already been reported.<sup>3</sup> This poster reports data from the Saudi Arabia analysis.

## METHOD

- ACTION Teens was a global, online survey study conducted between August and December 2021.<sup>3</sup>
- Three groups were recruited via online panels/databases.
  - ALwO were aged 12 to <18 years and had obesity, defined as a body mass index (based on self-reported data)  $\geq 95^{\text{th}}$  percentile for age and sex.
  - Caregivers were the parent or legal guardian of an ALwO, lived with the ALwO  $\geq 50\%$  of the time and were involved in the ALwO's healthcare decisions.
  - HCPs had  $\geq 2$  years of experience in clinical practice, spent  $\geq 50\%$  of their time in direct patient care and reported seeing/treating  $\geq 10$  ALwO in a typical month.
- Separate but overlapping cross-sectional surveys were developed for each group, under the guidance of an international steering committee.
  - Questions covered a range of topics, including attitudes towards obesity; weight-loss attempts, motivators and barriers; and conversations with HCPs about weight.
- In Saudi Arabia, 500 ALwO, 500 caregivers and 200 HCPs completed the survey and were included in the Saudi Arabia analysis.

## RESULTS

- Most ALwO (88%), caregivers (85%) and HCPs (90%) indicated that obesity has a strong impact on a person's overall health and wellbeing (Figures 1–3).
- All ALwO and caregivers thought their/their child's weight was above normal, while 99% of ALwO and >99% of caregivers worried about weight affecting their/their child's future health.
- Although most ALwO (70%) reported a recent weight-loss attempt, fewer caregivers (57%) reported this for their ALwO and HCPs reported this for only 45% of their ALwO patients.
- Some ALwO (37%) and caregivers (35%) believed weight loss was entirely their/their child's responsibility, and many HCPs (57%) agreed (Figures 1–3).
- According to ALwO (53%) and caregivers (45%), a top weight-loss motivator for ALwO was being unhappy with their weight; HCPs most commonly indicated that ALwO were motivated by wanting to fit into a smaller clothing size (selected by 57% of HCPs) (Figures 1–3).
- Among ALwO and caregivers, the most commonly reported weight-loss barriers were ALwO's inability to control hunger (41% and 49%, respectively) and enjoyment of unhealthy food (35% and 34%, respectively); HCPs most often agreed that lack of exercise (90%) and unhealthy eating habits (88%) were barriers (Figures 1–3).
- Most HCPs felt somewhat/very comfortable discussing weight with ALwO patients (99%) and caregivers (99%), but among the subset of ALwO (n=254) and caregivers (n=251) who had discussed their/their child's weight with an HCP in the past year, many ALwO (61%) and caregivers (59%) reported  $\geq 1$  negative feeling following their most recent weight discussion with the HCP.
- Few HCPs (24%) reported receiving advanced training in obesity/weight management beyond medical school.



## CONCLUSION

- Like the ACTION Teens global analysis,<sup>3</sup> the ALwO, caregivers and HCPs in Saudi Arabia were aligned regarding the impact of obesity on overall health and wellbeing.
- However, attitudes towards the ALwO's responsibility for weight loss were not aligned, as more than half of HCPs believed it was completely the ALwO's responsibility to lose weight versus just over one third of ALwO and caregivers.
- All ALwO and caregivers thought their/their child's weight was above normal, and almost all were worried about weight affecting their/their child's future health; by comparison, in the global analysis, a lower proportion of ALwO and caregivers thought the ALwO's weight was above normal (76% and 66%, respectively) and worried about weight affecting their future health (85% and 80%, respectively).<sup>3</sup>
- HCPs may benefit from organised obesity medical training to improve communication with ALwO/caregivers.

## REFERENCES

- (1) World Health Organization. Global Health Observatory data repository. 2017. <https://apps.who.int/gho/data/view.main.BMIPLUS2C05-19v?lang=en> (Accessed September 2023).
- (2) World Obesity Federation. World Obesity Atlas 2022. <https://www.worldobesity.org/resources/resource-library/world-obesity-atlas-2022> (Accessed September 2023).
- (3) Halford JCG, et al. *Pediatr Obes* 2022;17:e12957.

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