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Beyond weight loss: building sustained, medically supervised obesity care

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Dr Lee Yanqing, Family Physician and COO of HMI OneCare Clinics, explains how individual assessment, lifestyle support and ongoing monitoring shape long-term obesity management



Medically supervised obesity care involves more than deciding whether to prescribe treatment. Individual health risks, previous weight management efforts, lifestyle habits and quality of life all help shape a care plan, while regular follow-up supports treatment monitoring and sustainable changes.

In this interview, Dr Lee Yanqing, Family Physician and Chief Operating Officer of HMI OneCare Clinics in Singapore, discusses how doctors assess treatment needs and why continuity of care is central to managing obesity as a chronic condition.

How do you assess whether someone needs medically supervised obesity care, and what determines whether lifestyle support alone or prescription treatment is appropriate?

Obesity is a chronic and multifactorial condition, and its management should be individualised according to each person's health needs, risk factors and treatment goals.

Across our network of close to 40 HMI OneCare Clinics islandwide, our doctors take a holistic approach that goes beyond body weight alone. This includes assessing Body Mass Index (BMI), waist circumference, existing medical conditions, metabolic risk factors, lifestyle habits and previous weight management efforts. Importantly, we also consider how excess weight may be affecting the individual's overall health and quality of life.

Lifestyle modifications, including balanced nutrition, regular physical activity and sustainable behavioural changes, remain the cornerstone of obesity management. For individuals who meet the appropriate clinical criteria, particularly those with obesity-related health risks or complications, prescription treatment may be considered alongside lifestyle interventions.

The decision to initiate medication is guided by clinical assessment, potential benefits and risks, and the individual's preferences and readiness for treatment. Through shared decision-making, we aim to develop a personalised care plan that prioritises safety, long-term health improvements and sustainable outcomes, rather than weight loss alone.

What does sustained obesity management involve beyond prescribing medication, including follow-up, nutritional support and monitoring for side effects?

Effective obesity management extends well beyond prescribing medication. As obesity is a chronic condition, achieving and maintaining meaningful health improvements requires ongoing medical support, lifestyle modifications and regular reassessment over time.

In our approach to holistic weight management, we emphasise continuity of care through regular follow-ups to assess treatment progress, monitor tolerability and review each patient's evolving health needs. Beyond changes in body weight, we also look at improvements in relevant health indicators, such as blood pressure, blood glucose and other metabolic risk factors, as well as overall well-being and quality of life.

Nutritional guidance, regular physical activity and sustainable behavioural changes remain integral to long-term success, regardless of whether medication is prescribed. For patients receiving prescription treatment, our doctors monitor for potential side effects, evaluate treatment response and adjust management plans where clinically appropriate. Patient education is equally important in setting realistic expectations and empowering individuals to take an active role in managing their health.

Through our collaboration with Singlife and Novo Nordisk, we hope to improve access to structured, medically supervised weight management within the primary care setting, supporting individuals in achieving meaningful and lasting improvements in their health and well-being.