



COALITION CONTRE
l'obésité morbide

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate publication

**The Coalition against Morbid Obesity discloses the results
of the first survey giving a voice to Quebec's morbidly obese people**

Montreal, October 10, 2007 – At a press conference held today at the Women's Y of Montreal, Josée Roy and Jennifer Schultz, cofounders of the *Coalition against Morbid Obesity*, presented the highlights of the survey conducted by the Coalition between March 22 and July 31, 2007, with over 1,000 Quebecers suffering from morbid obesity. "First, this survey finally enables us to invalidate the long-standing prejudices against morbidly obese people, notably regarding their socio-demographic profile. It also allows us to confirm the alarming health condition of morbidly obese people that necessarily entails high costs to our healthcare system. Ultimately, the survey demonstrates a lack of social and medical support for these persons who are both in pain and desperate," declared Josée Roy. Based on the survey results, the Coalition will soon announce its action plan for the next few months.

Significant results

The research firm *Zins Beauchesne et associés* had been commissioned by the Coalition to compile and analyze the results of this survey. "A total of 1,011 respondents participated in the survey, accounting for a margin of error of ± 3.1 percent, 19 times out of 20", commented Zins Beauchesne Assistant Director Claire Naboulet, who presented the highlights. To consult the highlights of the survey, go to http://lepoidsquitue.com/salledepresse_fr.php.

Typical profile

The survey reveals a typical profile of the morbidly obese Quebecer. Eight out of ten times, it is a woman, aged between 31 and 45 years old, with a body mass index varying from 40 to 50. Her educational level and revenue bracket are similar to those of average Quebecers. She is afflicted with multiple pathologies associated to morbid obesity (articulatory deficiencies, hypertension, depression, sleep apnea, etc.) and is very concerned by her health condition. She is mobility-challenged and has little support from the family, social and health network. In Quebec, the typical morbidly obese person is desperate about her situation.

Claim

"And yet, there is a solution. The raison d'être of our Coalition is to improve access to bariatric surgery in Quebec for the 200,000+ people suffering from morbid obesity. Some 3,500 persons are on a waiting list for their turn to benefit from bariatric surgery. Most of them will have to wait at least 5 years as only 1,000 bariatric surgeries are being performed each year. We will repeat it as many times as necessary: morbid obesity is a disease. Bariatric surgery is the only efficient treatment of morbid obesity. It is a matter of life and death," said Jennifer Schultz. It should be noted that on August 23, a major study on bariatric surgery was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (<http://content.nejm.org/>). This study effectively shows the beneficial impact of bariatric surgery on the health and survival of morbidly obese people.

Morbid obesity

Morbid obesity is the starting point for different types of diseases that are often fatal, such as arterial hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, or heart disease. An individual's obesity level can be evaluated by means of the body mass index (BMI), which is calculated by dividing the person's weight by his or her height squared (Kg/m^2). Morbid obesity corresponds to a BMI higher than or equal to 40, or higher than or equal to 35 if accompanied by comorbidities.

Bariatric surgery

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), bariatric surgery is considered to be the only effective treatment for morbid obesity. In Québec in 2005, the *Agence d'évaluation des technologies et des modes d'intervention en santé* (AETMIS) tabled a report entitled "Surgical Treatment of Morbid Obesity – Update", which reviews all of the bariatric surgery techniques. The AETMIS recommended establishing an action plan in Québec to define the need for bariatric surgery and devise ways to respond to these.

About the Coalition against Morbid Obesity

Created in February 2007, the Coalition against Morbid Obesity is a non-profit, Quebec-based organization that draws on the strength of association to increase awareness of the issue of morbid obesity and to foster better access to bariatric surgery in Québec. Its signature, "Weight that kills", expresses the dramatic situation that is experienced by people who are suffering from morbid obesity. As its name indicates, this disease leads to a faster death for those who are afflicted. For more information, visit www.lepoidsquitue.com.

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