Patient-perceived barriers to bariatric surgery in the rural Deep South

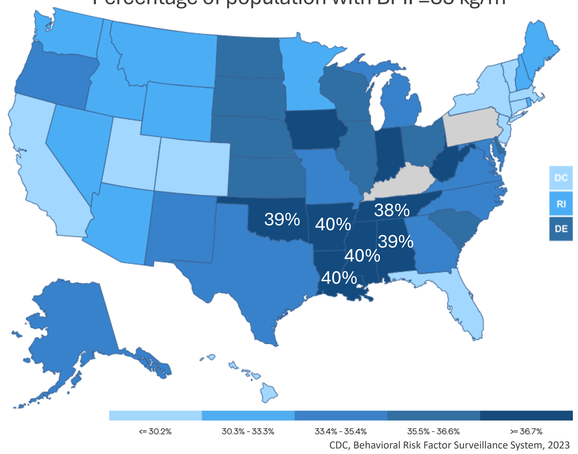
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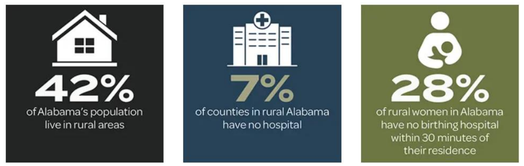
Introduction

- The Deep South has the highest rate of obesity in America

Percentage of population with BMI ≥35 kg/m^2



- Bariatric surgery is underutilized in the Deep South
- Many in the Deep South live in rural areas (e.g. 82% of counties in Alabama are rural)



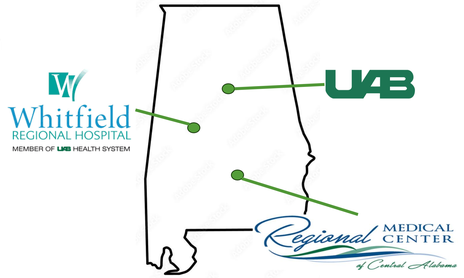
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Purpose

- To explore the unique challenges faced by patients in the rural Deep South in accessing bariatric surgery

Methods

- Multicenter survey study
- Participants recruited from surgery clinics at 3 sites in Alabama
  - University of Alabama at Birmingham
  - Regional Medical Center of Central Alabama
  - Bryan Whitfield Memorial Hospital
- Participants (n=127):
  - Patients
  - Providers
  - Organizational/community/policy leaders
- Survey based on NIH PhenX (consensus measures for Phenotypes and eXposures) Toolkit
- "Rural" defined as living within census tracts with Rural Urban Commuting Area codes 4.0 and above (usda.gov) based on participant's zip code

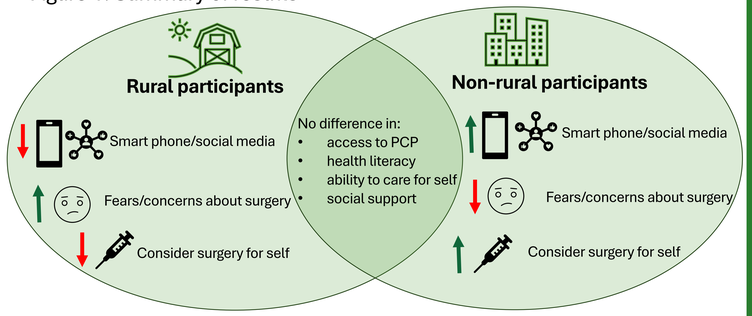


Results

Table 1. Demographics

	Overall N=127	Rural N=59	Non-rural N=68	p-value
Gender				
Female	97 (76%)	57 (84%)	40 (68%)	0.046
Income				
≤$30,000/yr	56 (44%)	31 (46%)	25 (42%)	0.180
No. of dependents				
5 or more	31 (24%)	21 (31%)	10 (17%)	0.003
Employment				
Unemployed	12 (9%)	10 (15%)	2 (3%)	0.004
Education				
College or higher	27 (21%)	17 (25%)	10 (17%)	0.270

Figure 1. Summary of results



Results

Table 2a. Survey results, all

	Overall N=127	Rural N=59	Non-rural N=68	p-value
Use tablet/smartphone for health				
Yes	98 (77%)	38 (64%)	60 (88%)	0.001
Use social media				
Yes	116 (91%)	50 (85%)	66 (97%)	0.014
Afraid of bariatric surgery				
Yes	47 (38%)	36 (63%)	11 (16%)	<0.001
Concerned about				
Risks	61 (50%)	37 (67%)	24 (35%)	<0.001
Cost	48 (39%)	29 (53%)	19 (38%)	0.005
Travel	20 (16%)	13 (23%)	7 (10%)	0.052
Consider bariatric surgery for self				
Yes	97 (76%)	37 (63%)	60 (88%)	<0.001
Recommend bariatric surgery for others				
Yes	85 (67%)	37 (63%)	48 (71%)	0.347

Table 2b. Survey results, bariatric clinic

	Overall N=79	Rural N=11	Non-rural N=68	p-value
Use tablet/smartphone for health				
Yes	67 (85%)	7 (64%)	60 (88%)	0.035
Use social media				
Yes	76 (96%)	10 (91%)	66 (97%)	0.322
Afraid of bariatric surgery				
Yes	14 (18%)	3 (27%)	11 (16%)	0.371
Concerned about				
Risks	28 (36%)	4 (40%)	24 (35%)	0.772
Cost	25 (32%)	6 (60%)	19 (28%)	0.043
Travel	7 (9%)	0 (0%)	7 (10%)	0.273
Consider bariatric surgery for self				
Yes	71 (90%)	11 (100%)	60 (88%)	0.230
Recommend bariatric surgery for others				
Yes	59 (75%)	11 (100%)	48 (71%)	0.037

Conclusion

- Participants in the rural Deep South were less likely to use electronics or social media and more likely to be concerned about the safety, cost, and travel to receiving bariatric surgery, and less likely to consider bariatric surgery for self.
- In the subgroup of participants recruited in bariatric surgery clinic, rural participants were as likely to consider bariatric surgery for self and more likely to recommend bariatric surgery to others.