

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter to the Editor

Mixed Messages

I read with interest the review by Lavie et al. (1) on obesity and heart failure. The scholarly article contains some mixed messages. On the one hand, there are the deleterious effects of obesity on cardiac structure and function with all the features of lipotoxicity (2); and on the other hand, there is the “obesity paradox” with overweight of heart failure patients improving morbidity and mortality, as first reported by Tamara Horwich and the group at University of California at Los Angeles (reviewed in Lavie et al. [1]). Are there any plausible reasons for the mixed messages? I believe there are. Just as there are metabolically obese normal weight persons, there are also metabolically normal obese persons (3). Thus, there is a subgroup of obese persons who lack the other main features of the metabolic syndrome, including lipotoxicity. It is tempting to speculate that it is this group that comprises the “obesity paradox.” We have recently advanced the hypothesis that bariatric surgery unloads the metabolically stressed heart (4). In our cohort, there was a progressive regression of left ventricular mass over 2 years after bariatric surgery while insulin resistance disappeared at 3 months and other parameters of obesity, including body mass index and body composition, plateaued at 9 months (reviewed in Algahim et al. [4]). In short, I could not agree more with the Lavie et al. (1) that more studies are needed to determine the short- and long-term impact of intentional weight loss on obese patients with heart failure. Until then, we have to live with

the mixed messages of lipotoxicity on the one hand and the obesity paradox on the other.

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