Lisa M. Neff, MD
Dr. Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman Fellow in Diabetes & Metabolism
2003 – 2006

Education

Dr. Neff earned her B.S. in German and Biology from Tufts University in 1994, her M.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1999, and her M.S. in Clinical and Translational Research from the Rockefeller University in 2010. She completed a residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2002 and a dual fellowship in Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism, as a Friedman Fellow, and Clinical Nutrition at Tufts Medical Center in 2006. In 2009, she completed the Clinical Scholar Program at the Rockefeller University. Dr. Neff is a Diplomat of the American Board of Internal Medicine, Subspecialty Board in Endocrinology and Metabolism. Dr. Neff is also certified by the American Board of Physician Nutrition Specialists.

Former and Current Position(s) and Academic Interests

In 2009, Dr. Neff was appointed to the faculty of Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Endocrinology. She is also a faculty member at the Northwestern Comprehensive Center on Obesity (NCCO; web site http://www.ncco.northwestern.edu).

The focus of Dr. Neff's clinical work is the management of obesity and type 2 diabetes in adults. She sees patients in Northwestern's Center for Lifestyle Medicine, the clinical arm of the NCCO). The center provides a full spectrum of weight management services, including counseling about lifestyle modification, pharmacotherapy for weight loss, and weight loss surgery. In addition, the center has support staff including dietitians, nurse practitioners, and a health psychologist, including a dietitian and nurse practitioner who are certified diabetes educators.

Dr. Neff's primary research is designed to investigate factors which may be involved in the process of metabolic adaptation to weight loss or gain. In the case of weight loss, this adaptive process leads to reduced energy expenditure, increased hunger, and decreased satiety or fullness and is thought to contribute to the high rates of recidivism seen with obesity treatments. Dr. Neff and her colleagues at the NCCO have recently completed a clinical study investigating the role of body temperature in adaptation to weight loss in obesity, and results have been presented at national meetings in summer 2014. Preliminary findings suggest that body temperature declines during weight loss. In November, Dr. Neff and colleagues will present additional novel data from this study which suggests that brown adipose tissue (a tissue involved in adaptation to cold or overfeeding) may confer metabolic benefits including improved lipid profiles. It is hoped that an increased understanding of the process of metabolic adaptation may lead to novel treatment approaches for obesity and related metabolic diseases in the future.

Dr. Neff has also recently completed a metabolic feeding study investigating the effects of three different dietary patterns, including the DASH diet, on metabolic syndrome parameters, in the absence of weight change. Data analysis is ongoing and results are expected by early 2015.

Dr. Neff also serves as an investigator for multi-center trials of new therapeutic options for the treatment of obesity and/or metabolic disorders, such as diabetes. Dr. Neff is the site PI at

Northwestern for the Vitamin D to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes (D2d) Study (PI Dr. Pittas). Dr. Neff is also a Co-Investigator for an ongoing NIH-supported randomized controlled trial of an intensive lifestyle intervention for the prevention of excessive gestational weight gain in obese pregnant women. In addition, Dr. Neff and her colleagues at Northwestern participate in industry-sponsored clinical trials of devices, drugs and behavioral programs for obesity and diabetes.

For many years, Dr. Neff has been actively involved in educating medical students, physicians, allied health professionals, and the general public, particularly in the fields of nutrition and obesity. This year, for example, she was an invited speaker at the American Gastroenterologic Association Annual Meeting. She is a lecturer and small group leader for the Northwestern medical student endocrinology and nutrition courses, and she teaches and mentors students, residents, and fellows in her clinic and during research rotations. This year, she also became a mentor for the Northwestern Medicine Scholars Program, in which high school students from a predominantly minority Chicago public high school are matched with a Northwestern faculty mentor. The goal of the program is to increase students' interest in careers in medicine and science.

Dr. Neff is a member of the Obesity Society, the Endocrine Society, and the American Society of Nutrition. She currently serves on the Obesity Society's Education Committee. This year, Dr. Neff was invited to go to Washington, DC to participate in the Society's lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill to increase awareness of and funding for obesity treatment.

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