

An Introduction to Obesity

John Matthew*

The University of Sydney, Camperdown, Australia

EDITORIAL

Obesity is a medical disease in which excess body fat has built up to the point where it may be harmful to one's health. People are deemed obese if their body mass index (BMI), which is calculated by dividing a person's weight by the square of their height (despite known allometric inaccuracies[a]), is greater than 30 kg/m²; the range 25–30 kg/m² is considered overweight. Lower values are used in some East Asian countries. Obesity has been linked to a number of diseases and ailments, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea, cancer, and osteoarthritis. High BMI is a risk factor for diseases caused by nutrition, physical activity, and environmental variables, although it has not been demonstrated to be a direct cause. Obesity and depression have been proven to have a reciprocal relationship, with obesity raising the risk of clinical depression and depression increasing the risk of obesity.

Diet, physical activity, mechanization, urbanization, genetic susceptibility, pharmaceuticals, mental illnesses, economic policies, endocrine disorders, and exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals are all factors that contribute to obesity on an individual, social, and environmental level. While the majority of obese people are trying to reduce weight at any given time and are often successful, research shows that maintaining such weight loss over time is rare. The causes of weight cycling are unknown, however they could include lower energy expenditure and an increased biological desire to eat during and after calorie restriction. More research is needed to see if yo-yo dieting and weight cycling contribute to inflammation and disease risk in obese people.

Obesity prevention necessitates a multifaceted approach that includes community, family, and individual treatments.

The major treatments advocated by health professionals are dietary changes and exercise. Reduced consumption of energy-dense foods, such as those high in fat or sugar, and increased consumption of dietary fibre can enhance diet quality. In wealthy countries, however, large-scale researchers have discovered an inverse association between energy density and energy cost of meals. Low-income people are more likely to live in "food deserts" or "food swamps," areas where essential foods are scarce. To suppress appetite or fat absorption, medications can be used in conjunction with a healthy diet. If diet, exercise, and medicine do not work, a gastric balloon or surgery may be used to reduce the size of the stomach or the length of the intestines, resulting in a faster sense of fullness or a reduced ability to absorb nutrients from food. Obesity is a leading preventable cause of death in both adults and children around the world. In 195 nations, 600 million adults (12%) and 100 million children were obese in 2015. Women are more likely than men to be obese. It is considered by authorities to be one of the most important public health issues of the twenty-first century. Obesity is stigmatised in much of the modern world (especially in the Western world), despite the fact that it was once viewed as a symbol of prosperity and fertility and still is in some parts of the world. Obesity was recognised as a disease by numerous medical groups in 2013, including the American Medical Association and the American Heart Association.

Correspondence to: John Matthew, The University of Sydney, Camperdown, Australia E-mail: john.matthew04@gmail.com

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