

CCGL9043

Obesity: Beyond a Health Issue



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Lesson 1: Introduction

- Beliefs & Experiences about Obesity
- Course Outline
- What is Obesity?
- Is Epidemic an Overstatement?

Beliefs & Experiences about Obesity

Instructions

There is **no right or wrong answers** to the rating of beliefs about obesity, and the focus is on how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements. Please **do not leave any blank**.

Please go to
<http://tinyurl.com/hvq9cnf>

Beliefs & Experiences about Obesity

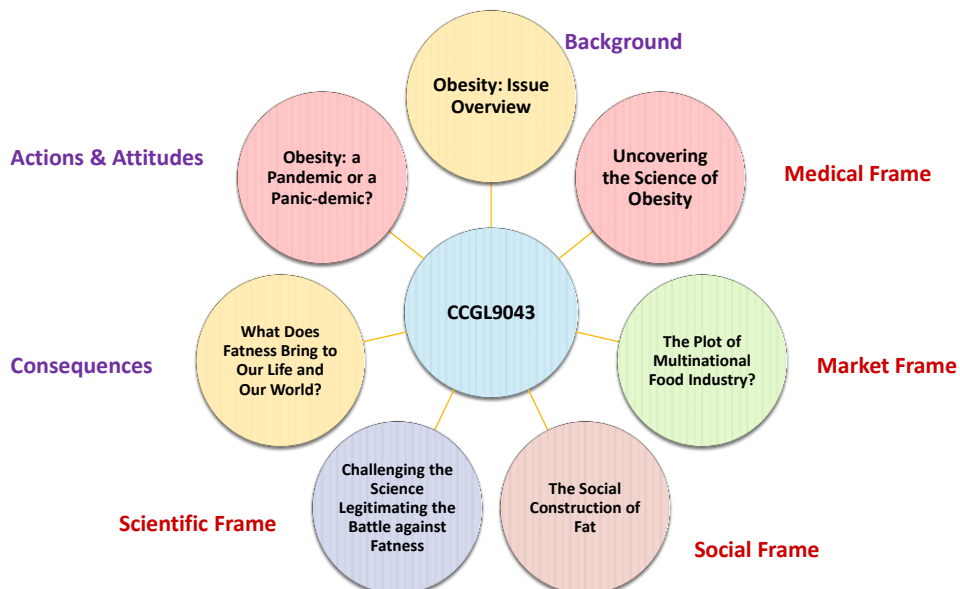
<http://tinyurl.com/hvq9cnf>

- Part I: Personal Particulars
- Part II: Beliefs about fat people (7-point scale)
- Part III: Beliefs about obesity (6-point scale)
- Part IV: Beliefs about the causes of obesity (5-point scale)
- Part V: Weight bias experience (Yes/No)

Aims

- This course aims to extend students' understanding **beyond the conventional thinking** that fatness is undesirable.
- Through **critical evaluation** of **arguments** presented by the supporters and critics of obesity problematization, and **analysis** of the **causes** and **consequences** of obesity from **multiple perspectives** in a robust and rigorous manner, these enable students to reach a **reasoned position** in the obesity controversy, and make **informed decisions** for taking **actions** in response to obesity at individual, societal and global levels.

Course Outline



Assessment

Assessment Method	Details of Assignment	Weighting (%)
Case study	Group project presentation on authentic case studies	20
Debates	Debate over controversies in obesity	20
Online discussion	Online discussion forum for exchanging thoughts and beliefs	10
Participation in lectures and tutorials	In-class and tutorial participation	10
Individual assignments	Initial essay (10%), reflective memo (15%) and final essay (15%)	40

Initial Essay (10%)

**There is no right or wrong answers.
It is your personal view which matters!**

1. Do you agree that obesity is a result of failure in controlling one's willpower? Why?
2. If you want to convince your friend with your position, what arguments you will propose to convince him/her?
3. If someone holds an opposite position with you on this issue, what arguments he/she may have?
4. According to the arguments you have proposed in question 3, can you write down your opposing ideas to justify your position?

Initial Essay (10%)

- Below are the format requirements:
 - Two-page A4 maximum
 - Font size 12
 - Single line spacing
 - Times New Roman font

Please submit a **soft copy** of your assignment to Moodle **before Feb 3 (Wed) at 12:30 pm** AND a **hard copy** of your assignment during the class on Feb 3 (Wed).

Reflective Memo (15%)

- The reflective memo is for you to keep track of your **beliefs about obesity** throughout the course. Students are required to put down their **thoughts and feelings (not for jotting notes!!)** (in no more than 100 words) **within one week** after each lecture.
- Each memo should start with the **lecture and the date of the lecture** (e.g. Lecture 1, 19/01/2016).
- This assignment will be graded based on (1) **intellectual engagement** with concepts, theories or issues covered, (2) **personal development**, (3) **regularity** and more. Please refer to Moodle for details about the grading criteria.

Reflective Memo Sample (1)

Lecture 2 28/01/2015

Is obesity "only" about diet, lifestyle and genetics?

No, obesity is not "only" about these three factors. There are also other factors that may cause obesity.

1. The living environment

- Bisphenol A (BPA)
 - a main ingredient of polycarbonate
 - a member of the Endocrine Disrupter Substance
 - enters the body primarily through the ingestion of foods and liquids that have come into contact with BPA-containing materials
 - It may correlated with BMI and the health consequence of BPA exposure should be fully evaluated.
- Technology development
 - Cars, MTR, public transportation, elevator etc.
 - Rapid technology development reduces people opportunities to do exercise and thus the output of energy decrease
- Busy working schedule - lack of time to do exercise

Reflective Memo Sample (2)

Thoughts about Obesity

4/2

1. good or bad food? -> no, only diets matter
2. Food policy? -> not objective, influenced by food company

11/2

1. collaboration, research facilities, funding, journal publication, scientific exchange -> influenced by food industry -> pay attention
 2. food industry seems responsible for overconsumption
 3. Higher calories -> more tasty
 4. higher portion size -> cheaper
 5. Bigger portion size
 - 3&4&5 encourage people to eat more
 6. marketing children is a effective strategy to encourage parents for buying food to their child due to pester power
- so, direct to child marketing should be regulated

Reflective Memo Sample (3)

February 11, 2015 (Lecture 4)

Carbonated drinks in schools

I remember that while I was attending school in the state of Indiana, USA, soda sales in schools were banned. The vending machines with Coke and Sprite and all were unplugged during the school hours and the canteens did not serve the carbonated drinks any more. But the same was not applied to high schools and colleges (somewhat obviously given that they are all capable of walking a few dozen yards outside school property to buy them anyways).

Trustworthiness of websites

Of course the websites are biased. At best, they will hide information that conflicts their interests and at their worst, they will manipulate results to fit their needs. That's why it is important for governments to make sure that neutral and accurate information is communicated to the public. In addition, the scientific community must disclose any information of sponsorship that may imply corporate involvement.

The funny thing about facts is that it often goes both ways, even at its most neutral state. Eating veggies is good. Eating meat is good. Eating more carbohydrates is good. Eating less carbohydrate is good. I believe it is less about the item of consumption itself but more about moderation – whatever it is, don't eat too much of it.

Reflective Memo Sample (4)

15th April 2015 (Lecture 10)

What does fatness bring to our life and our world?

During today's lectures, there were many interesting moments in my opinion. I felt like I learnt a lot of issues from a great variety of perspectives today, which I feel good about. Firstly, the truth about **intentional weight-loss** was established. It is true and I greatly believe that **weight-loss practices are not effective** at all. During one of the polls in previous lessons, I have answered the same, that the practice of weight loss is not effective. Today, in the lecture, Jessica explained that usually, people who lose weight would **get back to their baseline weight** after 5 years. Then, I have a question, why do people waste their money on getting gym memberships to lose weight when there are studies showing that it doesn't work? Is it related to the **social stigma of fat oppression in the society?**

I probably think it is the **fat shaming** in the society that is the reason behind losing weight. In order to achieve the **"normalized weight"**, discrimination of fat people is prevalent in all social contexts such as work, marriage, etc. In USA, obesity is even linked to being under poverty, which may be true, but I think it is quite a **strong statement to label obese people** as economically weak. The society, in my opinion, after all, just labels the obese people as being under poverty, but it doesn't do anything to get the obese people out of poverty. Is it unfair that obese people have to be treated in this manner? What shocks me is that obese staff are discriminated much more than normal people in a work environment and **obese women are much more affected by this discrimination** than men. It is the **prejudice of the society** and an imagined "normalized body" that the people have in their minds that causes such a phenomenon. It may be true that obese people may be inefficient in their work, but you can never generalize this statement to all obese people because in every pool of people, there are different types of people. (I.e. an obese person can be very productive and a normal person may not be). So, what we should do is **reduce stereotypes of people** in the society in order to give everyone equal opportunities. However, after all, we are all humans, so we are a species to have prejudice, so maybe, we cannot really do anything about it.

Reflective Memo Sample (5)

Thoughts about Obesity

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
1. 21 Jan Lecture 1	[edit]
2. 28 Jan Lecture 2	[edit]
3. 4 Feb Lecture 3	[edit]
4. 11 Feb Lecture 4	[edit]
5. 4 March Lecture 5	[edit]
6. 18 Mar Lecture 6	[edit]
7. 25 Mar Lecture 7	[edit]
7.1. statement 1: obesity is a disease	
7.2. statement 2: a linear correlation exists between weight and health risk	
8. 1 April Lecture 8	[edit]
9. 8 April Lecture 9 (Guest Lecture)	[edit]
10. 8 April Lecture 9	[edit]
11. 15 April Lecture 10	[edit]

21 Jan Lecture 1

[\[edit\]](#)

I think the main reason for the drop in mortality rate and increase in life expectancy despite an increase of obesity people around the world is that medical advancement and technology is also improving as well. and therefore, even though more and more people are becoming obese nowadays, life expectancy isn't decreasing because with the medical advancement, people can now live with a series of chronic illnesses which used to be classified as killer disease a decade ago.

people can sustain their life with more medication and surgery even though they have developed symptoms and complications due to obesity.

therefore, I think obesity DOES lead to poorer health, but it doesn't mean that people will die earlier or easier than the non-obese ones.

Ground Rules for Respectful Participation

Rule #1: No comment on others' body size.

Rule #2: To fulfill Rule #1 without hesitation.

Rule #3: To bear Rule #2 in mind throughout the semester.

Required Readings

Donohoe, M. (2012). Weighty matters – Public health aspects of the obesity epidemic. In M. Donohoe (Ed.), *Public health and social justice* (pp. 265-285). Hoboken: Wiley.

Monaghan, L., Rich, E., & Aphramor, L. (2010). Conclusion: Reflections on and developing critical weight studies. In E. Rich, L. Monaghan, & L. Aphramor (Eds.), *Debating obesity: Critical perspectives* (pp. 219-258). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rich, E., Monaghan, L., & Aphramor, L. (2010). Introduction: contesting obesity discourse and presenting and alternative. In E. Rich, L. Monaghan, & L. Aphramor (Eds.), *Debating obesity: Critical perspectives* (pp. 1-35). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Obesity: Beyond a Health Issue

Background & overview

Outline

What is obesity – definition

Prevalence

What is obesity?

Is body weight a good reflection of obesity?

Fatness = obese ?

Is fat /obese just a subjective description / portray?

Can we quantify them? Do we need to quantify them?

Fat and obese may share similar meaning to some but not others



10K.BC answered 2 years ago

One is a word (fat) that's been repurposed as a slang term for people who are overweight compared to societal norms. The big difference is that it's subjective and unspecific.

The other (obese) is a bit of medical jargon with a specific meaning and refers to people who are significantly overweight, and meet the criteria set for their age and height.

0 2

Comment



Jack answered 2 years ago

Fat would generally mean overweight. Obese refers to having such a large amount of body fat that it becomes a medical problem. Obese people would really stand out as being HUGE and close to being bed bound.

0 3

Comment



Charlotte answered 2 years ago

Obese is the medical term for overweight which I suppose is the polite term for fat so really there's no difference just worded differently

1 3

Comment



te144 answered 2 years ago

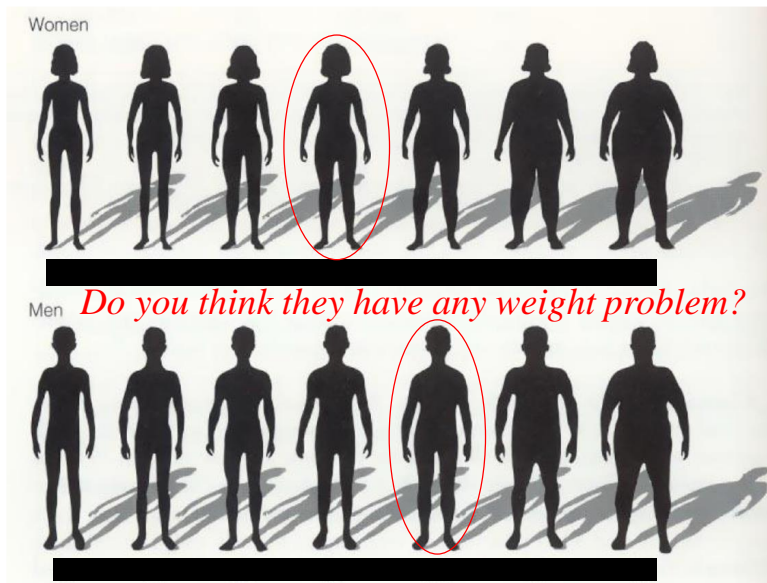
Fat: You survive him/her sitting on you.
Obese: Say your prayers.

1 3

Comment

How well do you agree with these?

<https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20120503090301AAdswsG>



Reprint from material of the Canadian Dietetic Association

Eye pleasing? Personal preference?
Very much affected by societal value!



<http://www.akhandjyoti.in/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/eye.png>

Quantifying fatness & obesity

Obesity is a situation in which body fat accumulates to an extent that exerts adverse impact(s) on health.

How much fat in the body will make one become obese?

Interestingly, obesity is generally defined by **BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)** rather than body fatness. (Why?)

Waist circumference also serves as a marker because where fat is located also influences health risk.

$$\text{BMI} = \text{Body weight in kg} / \text{height in m}^2$$

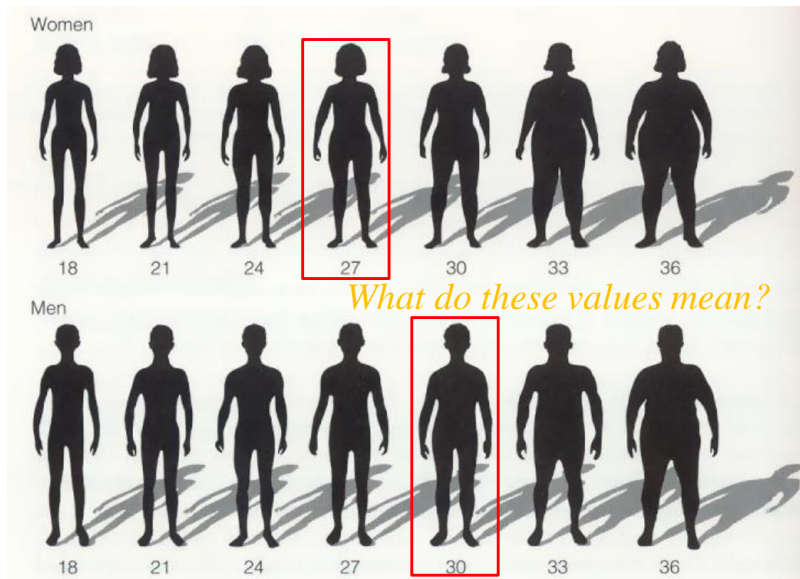
3. Find Your BMI #

1.
Find Your Height Here

BMI (kg/m ²)	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	35	40
4' 10"	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	167	191
4' 11"	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	173	198
5' 0"	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	179	204
5' 1"	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	185	211
5' 2"	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	191	218
5' 3"	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	197	225
5' 4"	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	204	232
5' 5"	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	210	240
5' 6"	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	216	247
5' 7"	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	223	255
5' 8"	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	230	262
5' 9"	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	236	270
5' 10"	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	207	243	278
5' 11"	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	250	286
6' 0"	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	258	294
6' 1"	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	265	302
6' 2"	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	272	311
6' 3"	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	279	319
6' 4"	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	287	328

2.
Locate Your Weight Here

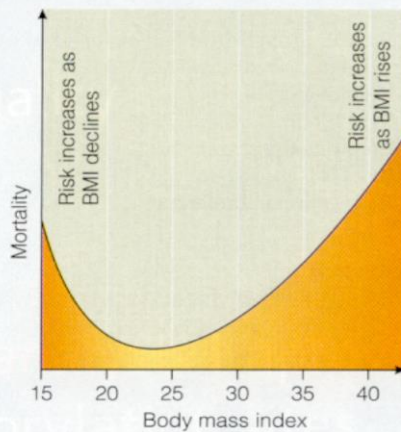
http://www.mos.org/cst/article/2040/download_12440.jpg



Reprint from material of the Canadian Dietetic Association

FIGURE 8-11 BMI and Mortality

This J-shaped curve describes the relationship between body mass index (BMI) and mortality and shows that both underweight and overweight present risks of a premature death.



Note: this pattern applies in general to non-Asian in developed countries

Whitney & Rolfes, 2005

The ethnicity factor

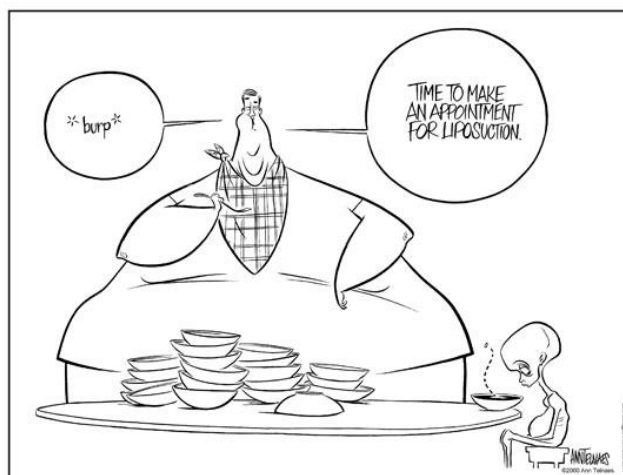
Body weight Classification

Underweight	<18.5
Normal weight	18.5 – 24.99
Overweight	25 – 29.99
Obese	> 30
I	30 – 34.99
II	35 – 39.99
III	> 40

Classification for Asians

Underweight	<18.5
Normal weight	18.5 – 22.99
Overweight	23 – 24.99
Obese	> 25

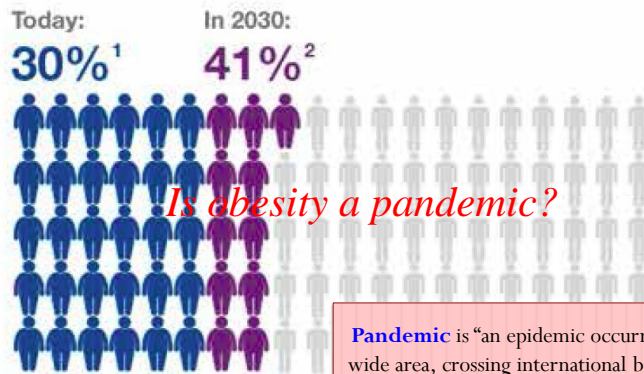
In 2000 the number of overweight people in the world for the first time matched the number of undernourished people — 1.1 billion each.



REPORT: THE NUMBER OF OVERWEIGHT PEOPLE IN THE WORLD
EQUALS THE NUMBER OF MALNOURISHED PEOPLE.

Latest statistics

> 2.1 billion people are overweight or obese worldwide

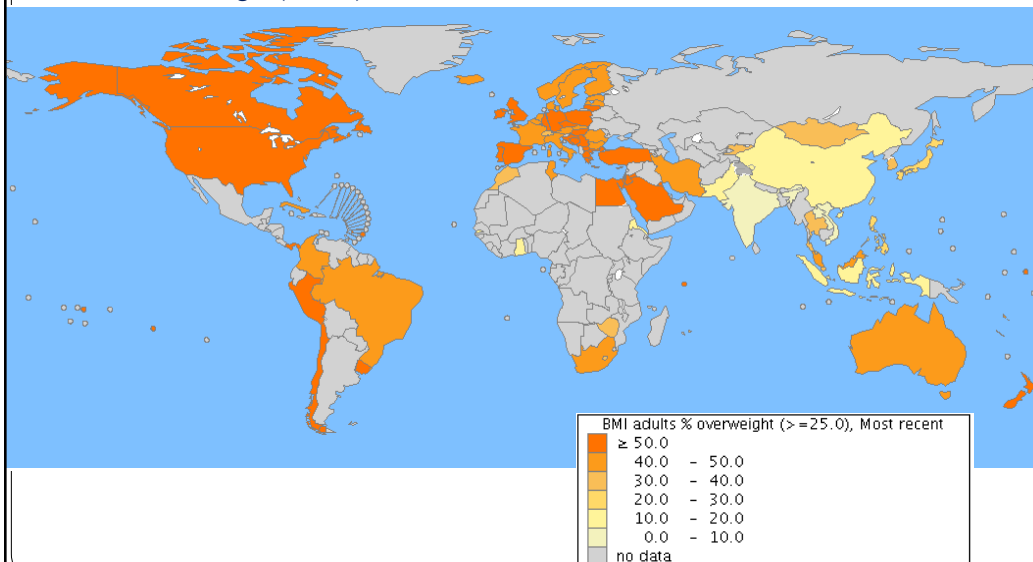


Pandemic is "an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people."

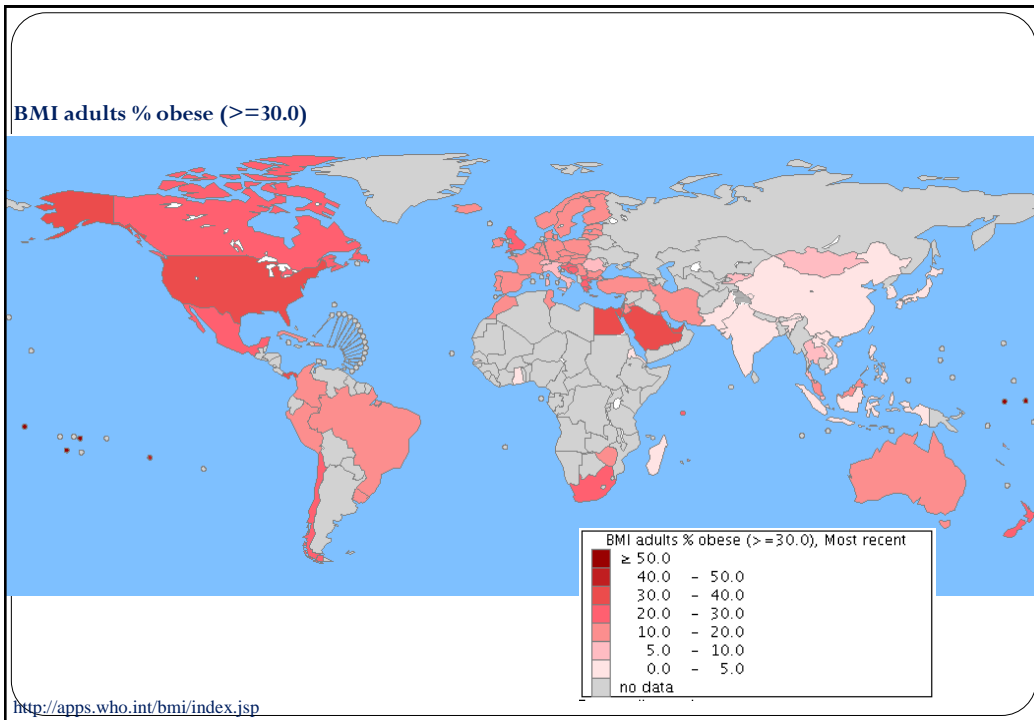
Overcoming obesity: an initial economic analysis, MGI 2014

Last IM et al (2001) A Dictionary of Epidemiology Oxford University Press.

BMI adults % overweight (≥ 25.0)



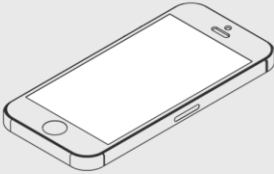
<http://apps.who.int/bmi/index.jsp>



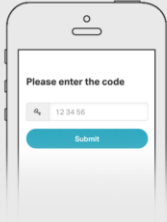
GUESS Which Country Has the highest average BMI?

Go to **www.govote.at** and use the code **30 19 12**

Which Country Has the highest average BMI?



www.govote.at



- 1** Grab your phone
- 2** Go to **www.govote.at**
- 3** Enter the code **30 19 12** and vote!

GUESS Which Country Has the highest average BMI?

A. The United States of America



B. Mexico



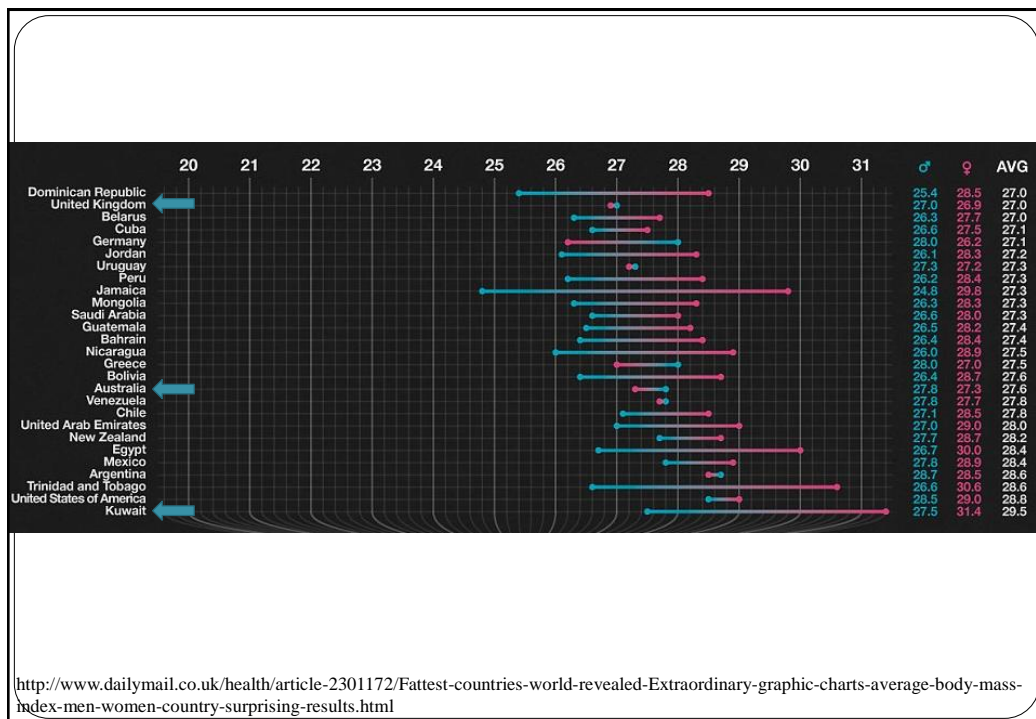
C. Kuwait



D. United Kingdom



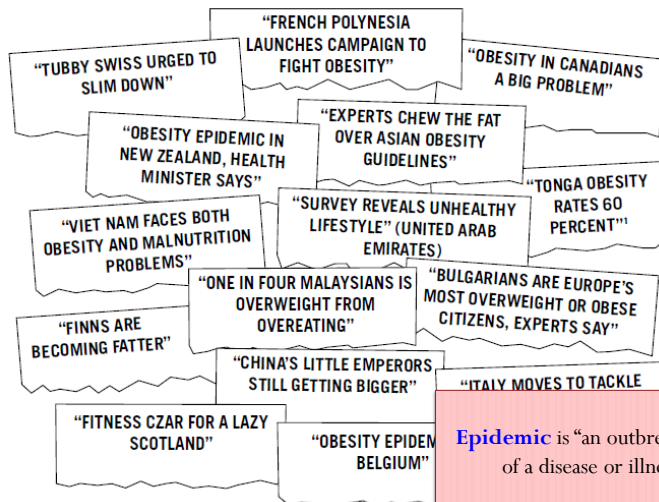
E. Australia



Kuwait

- Obesity in Kuwait - World's Fattest People???

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29x3nPHrEis>



Epidemic is "an outbreak or unusually high occurrence of a disease or illness in a population or area."

Epidemic is used time and time again by the press to describe the spread of obesity.

The American Heritage Medical Dictionary

Is Epidemic an Overstatement?



Eradicating poverty and malnutrition have always been a key objective of many nations and the World Health Organization (WHO).

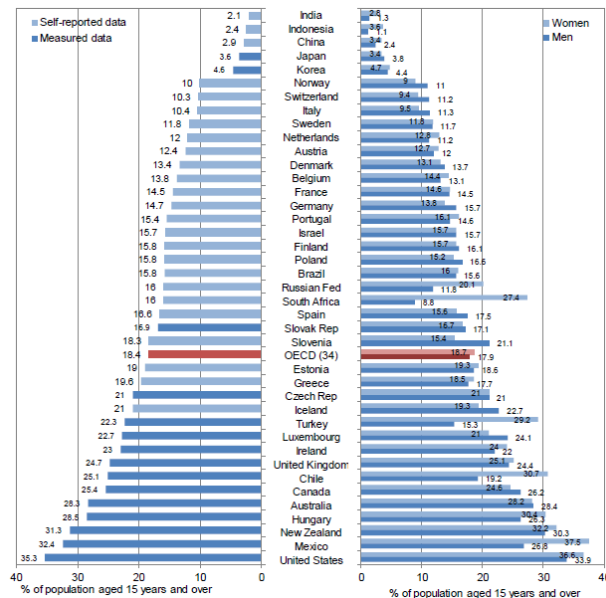


SCMP
Nov 24, 2009

Now, the number of overweight and obese is ~2.5X the number of undernourished.
(indicating the gap between rich and poor gets wider?)

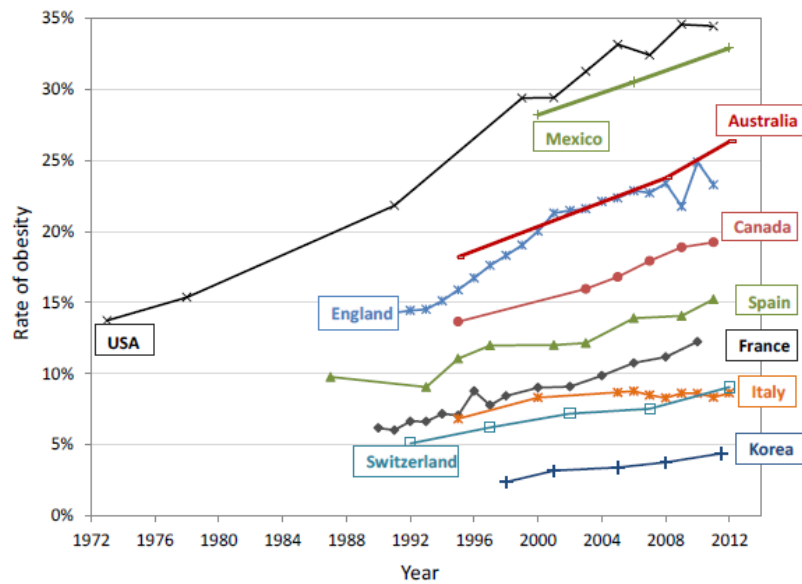


Obesity among adults, 2012 or nearest year



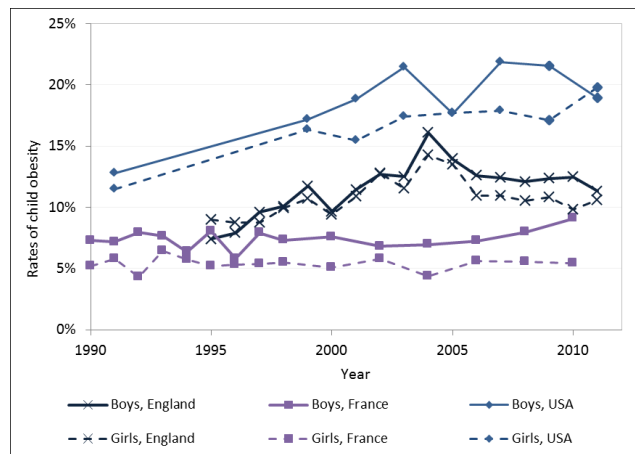
<http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Obesity-Update-2014.pdf>

Obesity Trend Among Nations



<http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Obesity-Update-2014.pdf>

Trends in child obesity of some developed countries, age 3 – 17 (note the geographic & gender differences)



<http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Obesity-Update-2014.pdf>

The Obesity trend

- Obesity prevalence **correlates**, in general with a country's **wealth**
- However, the pace is **faster for developing countries** experiencing rapid growth (such as China & India)
- The **worldwide prevalence** of obesity has nearly doubled between 1980 and 2008.
- Worldwide, at least 2.8 million people **die each year** as a result of being overweight or obese.

http://www.who.int/gho/ncd/risk_factors/obesity_text/en/

What about Hong Kong?

Table 3.3 Prevalence of obesity by sex in Hong Kong 2003/2004 (provisional data)³¹

Classification	BMI (kg/m ²)	Male	Female	Overall
Underweight	< 18.5	7.8%	12.4%	10.3%
Normal	18.5 – 22.9	46.8%	48.8%	47.9%
Overweight	23.0 – 24.9	20.1%	15.9%	17.8%
Obese	Above 25.0	22.3%	20.0%	21.1%
Unknown/ missing	–	3.0%	2.9%	3.0%

Tackling Obesity, Department of Health, Hong Kong 2005

Selected findings in Hong Kong based on random sampling between 4/2011 and 1/2012

Children

(note the gender difference)

Age	Underweight		Overweight		Obese	
	Boys(%)	Girls(%)	Boys(%)	Girls(%)	Boys(%)	Girls(%)
7-9	8.0	10.1	18.2	16.6	10.0	6.2
10-12	7.6	9.8	22.4	19.7	10.2	3.2
Sub-total	7.8	9.9	20.5	18.3	10.1	4.5
Total	8.8		19.5		7.4	

Also, ~40% of middle-aged (40-59 years) men and older women (60-69 years) are obese

http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/healthy/physical_fitness_test/en/findings.php