

Obesity: america's modern day societal crutch



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Obesity: America's Modern Day Societal Crutch Matthew Murphy Abstract

Today's society has been faced with the never ending problem of obesity.

Many would blame this problem of obesity in America to poor genetics, unhealthy eating habits, and even lack of physical fitness. After viewing this paper and reviewing these credible sources the reader will have a better understanding as to why individuals become obese. All sources in this paper have been written, reviewed, and critiqued by credible individuals.

Obesity: America's Modern Day Societal Crutch In today's America we as citizens are faced with the ongoing crutch known as obesity. Obesity is defined as a medical condition in which excess body fat has accumulated to the extent of major health issues. I view obesity as a "crutch" because it is a disease that will slow the American populous down. The topic on obesity has been debated over many years as to who would take the blame of America's overweight problem and what that individual or group would do to prevent it.

Many different state legislatures and school board committees have started to ban vending machines in school grounds. "Congress has considered a menu-labeling legislation that would force chain restaurants to list fat, sodium, and calories for each item" (Balko, 2004, p. 522). Many individuals like me believe that this is definitely the most improper approach to preventing the obesity epidemic that has plagued the United States over the last twenty years. It is not the United State government's place to tell American citizens what they can or cannot consume.

Obesity has become more and more of a problem because American citizens are executing poor dietary techniques. The next influential factor to obesity is the influence of our biological need and genetics. These factors play a

large part in the obesity epidemic but the key factor to obesity is the fact that Americans are drastically decreasing their urges for physical fitness and health. Data has been collected from many different institutions and still the debate is on to see which group will inherit the blame of our nation's obesity problems.

Although many argue who is to blame for obesity, I believe that is in the hands of the individual and their poor diet techniques, biological factors, and their willingness to perform physical fitness. Dietary Techniques Obesity has become a crutch to the American way of life in the idea that we as individuals are not executing proper dietary techniques. The groups that are mainly targeted for obesity because of poor dieting techniques are low-income families throughout the United States. Obesity is on the rise in these families because more Americans are eating outside their homes at higher rates" (Bryan, 2006 p. 98). With the families going out to eat instead of staying home they are subject to a higher calorie intake than if they were to eat at home. The nutritional nature of fast food is unknown to many Americans because they have forfeited the need for knowledge on the matter. "Fast food restaurants and other fast food outlets are serving larger portions to consumers" (Bryan, 2006, p. 98).

This creates a dilemma for a person trying to stay within his/her healthy eating when a fast food business offers more food for cheaper than healthy food. In today's society Americans are looking at the almighty dollar instead of their dietary needs. If it cost fifteen dollars to eat healthy food and it only cost six dollars for a value meal then 9 times out of 10 the consumer is going to choose the value meal over healthy food. I also believe that

high advertisement of fast food and snack foods by large businesses influence the consumer to stray from their healthy diet.

Many businesses have begun to realize that Americans are becoming more and more aware of their dietary needs and are working to provide healthy foods at their restaurant chains. Biological Needs and Genetics The next factor we need to include in the reason of individuals themselves being responsible for our obesity is biological needs and even our genetics. "Humans are hardwired, as a survival strategy, to like foods high in sugar, fat, and calories" (Brownell & Nestle, 2006, p. 525). This may seem like it is not the individual's problem and could be blamed on biology.

This is an individual responsibility due to the fact that the human body can be controlled in a matter of survival. If one is desperate to survive and realizes that they are overweight they will cut back on excess calories. The closest example I have of survival is the urge to quit smoking because of all the scientific backing that states it can end your life. A responsible individual would quit smoking when he/she realizes they may die from the hazards. This survival response is the same with the obesity epidemic.

Individuals are placed into danger when they become obese and face many different side effects. Some of these health hazards include an array of thirty different diseases. Although there are many individuals out there that are willing to help themselves get over this epidemic, many individuals are unable to overcome obesity due to their genetic make-up. Physical Fitness and Health There are many different contributing issues that play into the obesity epidemic but the key factor is the decline of physical fitness and overall health.

Physical fitness has come to an all time low since the 1960's and the evolution of the industrial age. Research data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that over the past 50 years the relationship between activity at work and obesity has grown closer together. " In 1960, nearly half the jobs in the private sector required at least moderate physical activity, but in 2010, less than 20% demanded this much physical work" (Harvard, 2012). With industrialization and technology on the rise many Americans are relying on technology to get them through their lives.

Do not get me wrong, I believe that the use of technology makes this country an effective machine. The advances in technology has relieved stress off a man's back and applied it to his stomach. The health hazards that follow obesity are not just a big belly but also high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, stroke, gallstones, gout, some cancers, bladder control issues, and psychological disorders (Bryan, 2006, p. 97). The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) reported an increase in the prevalence of obesity from 11. 1% in the 1970's to 19. 3% in the early 2000's" (Samper-Ternent & Al Snih, 2011, p. 10-19). With the concern of citizens and their health on the rise I believe that the more information we get out to the people it will be beneficial to their survival. Discussion The epidemic that is obesity has become a modern day problem for America's society. Some would even go as far to say that it could even be a crutch for he United States. " Increases in the prevalence of obesity have been observed in men and women, in all age groups, in all major ethnic groups, and at all educational levels" (Samper-Ternent & Al Snih, 2011, p. 10). Individuals themselves could control and take

responsibility for their overweight situation which would allow them to become more active and healthy. If obesity is caught early on the individual will be more likely to overcome this hardship they have entered. We as individuals need to maintain our body and live a long, healthy life.

Just like Sir Isaac Newton stated, " A body in motion stays in motion... and a body at rest tend to remain at rest. " References Balko, R. (2011). Obesity: Who Is Responsible for Our Weight. In S. Barnet & H. Bedau (Authors), Current Issues and Enduring Questions (9th ed. , pp. 522-523). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's. Brownell, K. , ; Nestle, M. (2011). Are You Responsible for Your Own Weight? Con. In S. Barnet ; H. Bedau (Authors), Current Issues and Enduring Questions (9th ed. , pp. 524-525).

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