Essay on global obesity

Abstract

Since the development of fast foods or processed foods in the 1970s and the evolving nature of human life, obesity became a global pandemic, attacking not just the developed nations but also the developing nations. Outdoor activities and healthy meals are now replaced by fatty foods and the internet. A few would develop obesity due to a medical condition or health problem, which may also put them at risk to obesity-related health complications. As a result of this, increase of obesity and obesity-related complications are recorded each year as it gradually increases around the globe. While many complain with the slow development of prevention and intervention strategies in the part of the government and other related organizations, these groups are trying all possible means to reduce the current epidemic of global obesity. This paper will discuss the current status of obesity around the globe, as well as its causes, proposed solutions and a personal stance on how obesity could be resolved.

Since the development of fast foods or processed food in the 1970s and the evolving nature of human life, obesity became a global pandemic, attacking not just the developed nations but also the developing nations. Children and adults tend to forego their outdoor activities, and also prefer foods that are both easier to prepare and has more flavor. However, since these people tend to forego traditional meals and an active lifestyle, they tend to become overweight and prone to developing serious and debilitating diseases such as heart attacks, and chronic heart ailments. While many complain to their governments and related health organizations for their lack of action to prevent and resolve the problem of obesity, these groups are currently trying

various solutions to end the current epidemic of global obesity.

In the 2012 report of the World Health Organization, almost 2. 8 million people die per year worldwide due to being overweight or obese. Obesity had been noted by the report as one of the key factors which increases risks of coronary heart diseases, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other serious health complications. Since 1980 up to 2008, global obesity had doubled in numbers. In 2008 alone, 10% of men and 14% of women, roughly about half a billion people around the globe are obese. Obesity also influences the chances of the public to contract non-communicable diseases or NCDs. The WHO recorded 48% of deaths were due to cardiovascular diseases, which was then followed by 21% deaths due to cancer and 12% deaths due to chronic respiratory conditions. Aside from cardiovascular diseases, cancers and chronic respiratory conditions, the WHO also noted the increase in people who have high blood pressure and diabetes. In the WHO European Region assessment, 30% of the Europeans have raised blood pressure; which then puts them at high risk to contract stroke and heart ailments. Almost 1 in 10 adults worldwide is also noted to have diabetes, which may cause the development of cardiovascular diseases and kidney failure if left alone and untreated. Worldwide, the Americas hold the highest number of obese citizens with almost 62% overweight men and women while 26% are obese. Apparently, in contradiction to the Americas, Southeast Asia has the lowest number of obese/overweight citizens in the region with only 14% overweight while 3% are obese .

With the WHO noting that the number of obese throughout the globe has doubled since 1980, and now rapidly opens these people to heart

complications and other non-communicable diseases, the question is now directed to the causes of obesity. There are many means for one to develop obesity, each interrelated with another cause and would produce additional risks to the person. Some scientists and experts have debated whether or not obesity is caused by one's genes or due to the environment a person involves himself. In some instances, obesity could be caused by one's genetic makeup, an inborn disease or a chemical imbalance within the body. When it comes to one's genetic makeup, there are some families which tend to produce children with a large body mass if they are both overweight and obese. A study noted that if one parent is obese, there is a 40% chance of the child to be obese. It would increase up to 80% if both parents are obese or overweight. Some scientists have also discovered a gene known as " thrifty genes", which could only be found in aboriginal and minority groups in the US. Those possessing this gene tend to have obese members while some are known carriers of the gene to their descendants. Half-Americans is also noted by some scientists to produce obese offspring such as African-Americans, and Latinos .

Inborn diseases are also plausible causes of obesity as some diseases are known contributors to obesity. Hypothyroidism, Cushing's syndrome and the polycystic ovary syndrome, for example, causes a person's hormones to force the body to increase in body mass. While each of these disorders is considered hormonal disorders, each affects the body differently. Hypothyroidism influences the body's capacity to break down fat as the lack of thyroid hormone causes a person's metabolism to slow down or halt. In the case of the Cushing's syndrome, the extreme rate of cortisol causes the

body to grow continuously around the upper body. Patients with Cushing's syndrome find themselves continuously getting larger despite taking diets and weight controlling pills to stop becoming bigger. Finally, the polycystic ovary syndrome produces the same result as that of the Cushing's syndrome. However, in this case, a person continuously grows in body mass due to the high levels of androgens produced by the body . Experts also noted that some pharmaceutical treatments meant for obesity could induce chemical imbalances, which may counter the drug's original purpose to reduce and ruin one's appetite. While these drugs are capable of doing its purpose in disrupting one's eating, a person may find themselves indulging their hunger and eat more food as compared to what they eat before taking the medicines .

On the other hand, others clearly stress that obesity is caused by one's environment given the presence of fast and processed foods and technology, the influence of one's lifestyle, and due to one's emotions and cravings. Clearly, people are now becoming lazy to cook due to long hours in work, their economic standing, as well as their given lifestyle. As a result of this change, people now become obese as their lifestyles could afford them high end food and the privilege to get maids and servants to do their chores and other activities. With the lack of physical activity and continuous intake of foods, the human body is restricted in breaking down fat and eventually, all the excess fat is trapped in the body and renders the body to become larger and overweight . Emotions also play a key role in one's eating habits as food is often tied with certain emotions and events. Sweet foods are often associated with happiness and relief, which then causes people to indulge in

these types of food and eventually forget how many carbohydrates and calories are in these foods. Finally, the notable cause of obesity to increase around the globe is the presence of technology and the available food to the public, which then influences their eating habits and lifestyle. When it comes to food, fast and processed foods are now preferred by many as one no longer needs to spend a significant amount of time to prepare the meal. However, many of these read-to-eat foods contain high doses of calories, which gives people tendencies of extra meals each day. Experts from the US and the European nations have noted that a person now eats more calories than that of vitamins and minerals, causing them to become overweight. In children, the availability of fast foods influences their eating habits and food preferences. Since parents no longer have the time to cook traditional meals and children are often unattended, children would opt to buy fast foods for their meals. Technology wise, gadgets such as smartphones, televisions and computers now becomes instruments of people to do all their outdoor activities, such as going to the bank or hanging out online. In this end, this causes a decrease in physical activity as everything is now automated through the internet. Without physical activity to break down fat and cause people to burn pounds, the fat accumulated from eating, and the lack of exercise tends to build up clogs through arteries and veins, which fosters health complications due to obesity .

While the debate as to what causes obesity to occur around the globe, several solutions and intervention strategies are noted to try and reduce obesity cases worldwide as the numbers of obese citizens have increased dramatically throughout the years. Experts note that governments should

impose regulations and taxes to stop the growing " obesity epidemic" worldwide. Policies such as food restrictions for each age group, taxes for food and beverage advertising, as well as creating programs to introduce health and active lifestyles could curb the continuous growth of obesity. Without these policies, the governments creates a debilitating problems for the health, financial, education, and agriculture sectors as there are no clear regulation and strategies to ensure that food is given to all and introduce healthy living. One expert even noted that the UN should lead national governments to combat global obesity by calling for funding and global policies to create a unified strategy on eliminating obesity . Aside from government policies, good nutrition and an active lifestyle must be introduced to the public to counter the growing number of people who prefer fast food and reduced physical activity. In the United States, schools are now under the HeadStart program, which would allow them access to balanced school meals for their age group and have their daily intake of vitamins and minerals. Mandatory Physical Education classes are also implemented to ensure physical activity each day. The public and private sectors, especially the health institutions should also educate citizens with regards to proper diet, and medical advice to prevent obesity .

In a personal note, the best solution that could be done to resolve or reduce significantly the number of obese people around the globe is to start at home. Looking at the number of children and adults becoming obese each year, it should be noted that there must be a reason children and adults develop their current eating habits and lifestyle. Notably, these two factors are often developed first at home, which is why it is essential to concentrate

efforts in educating parents and students the importance of a balanced diet and an active lifestyle. Parents must refrain from always ordering or pre-heating processed foods not only because of the children would become exposed to fatty, and processed foods, it would also become the food they would mostly prefer. Some parents also tend to disregard food content in terms of their purchases of processed and fatty foods, therefore, adding the possibilities of becoming obese. Others would also be unaware as to the importance of exercise and how it could help the body maintain a slimmer figure. With these issues in mind, parents must be re-educated to understand food qualities and labels, as well as introduce to them healthier eating habits and exercise despite the growing demand to shorten the time for eating. Obesity prevention strategies can also be done at home and taught to families through counseling, and the community could also assist families in the intervention. Once families are assisted and educated over their eating and lifestyle efforts, it is likely that obesity can be reduced despite the dominance of fast and processed foods in the market and the growth of the online world .

As man slowly finds himself having lesser time to check his food and exercise to maintain a fit lifestyle and body, obesity rears itself to cause physical, mental and social problems to man. May it be caused by genes or the environment; it is undeniable that obesity is now becoming a global epidemic that must be stopped at all costs. The numbers reported by the WHO shows how much risks people are putting themselves into, as they try to remove healthy foods and active lifestyles in their regimen. Governments and other institutions now offer various anti-obesity programs to the public,

and while some of these programs may take time to show results, it is crucial to remember that intervention would not work if not all members of the society would work to eliminate the problem on global obesity.

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