

# Obesity as a social problem

Sociology



Obesity The social problem under discussion is obesity. Obesity is a social problem for various reasons. The term “ social” refers to interactions and relations among people. The obese persons interact less with people in the society. People who are obese or overweight have additional health problems. The health problems require additional medical attention and, therefore, divert time and funds to other uses. Most diabetic, heart diseases, and high-blood pressure stem from the obese condition. Treating and keeping the conditions under check attracts a substantial allocation of funds and attention. Sourcing for the funds creates significant burdens to communities, families, and the health care systems.

A general cause of obesity is the lack of energy balance. People may at times eat much, but move little. When one consumes high-energy diets, particularly from sugars and fats, but does not burn the energy through physical activity or exercise, the surplus energy is stored as fat by the body. An inactive lifestyle also leads to obesity. Many people spend hours watching TVs, sitting in front of computers, or attending to their schoolwork. Others prefer using cars instead of walking that neglects physical activity. Modern technologies at home and work have brought conveniences that reduce physical demands. Inactive people tend to gain weight easily because they do not burn calories taken from drinks and foods (“ NIH”).

Obesity results from genes manifested in a family lineage. Studies reveal that genes influence a person’s weight. Genes can determine the amount of fat that the body can store and where to locate the extra fat. There exists a link between environment and genes since families share physical activity habits and food. Obesity and overweight tend to run within families. Parents

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that are obese are likely to have obese children. A child will adopt their parent's habits. Children from overweight parents who are inactive and consume high-calorie foods are in risk of being overweight (Shah).

The environment one lives in has the potential to cause obesity. Lack of safe places for recreation, sidewalks, and affordable gyms limits the possibility of people to be physically active. Working schedules such as long working hours limits the time available to have adequate physical body exercise. Food adverts from food companies often target children. The foods have high-fat and calorie contents together with sugary drinks. Other causes are; smoking, medicine, emotional factors, age, pregnancy, and lack of sleep (“NIH”).

The conflict theory best explains obesity. It focuses on how the state and the elite control the weak in the society. The government has powers to control and regulate foods such as GMO that are safe for consumption. In Europe, GMOs are obsolete while the American law is less concerned on the future impacts of GMO. It has labelled such foods as safe. The FDA holds regulations of foods that are safe, but consumers cannot ascertain how safe they are. The government and FDA in this case are controlling the weak who happen to be the consumers. The weak consume foods that put them at risk of being overweight.

Several options are available to curb the obesity menace. WHO should have strategic measures that will focus on how to develop agricultural and food policies that will promote public health. It should put in place multi-sectorial policies that promote physical activity and provide relevant information. It should also regulate food marketing to avoid targeting vulnerable societies. Intervening on television food adverts that are high in sugar and fat can

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reduce cases of obesity. At the national level, states can use retail regulations, price manipulation, and public education to control obesity (Shah).

#### Works Cited

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