Culture and disease

Causality between Obesity and Depression? In the United s, obesity is an extremely big problem due to our stressful and quick lifestyle. It is much easier for a person to go through a fast food restaurant than to go home and cook a healthy dinner after a long stressful day at work. Obesity is a condition in which a person has exceeded a body weight which is not appropriate for their height. A good way of measuring this is due to the BMI or body mass index which calculates a scaled number based on the input of height and weight. Then a number is outputted which represents the BMI. 30 and above is considered obese. There are a variety of physiological conditions which can result from obesity. There is greater susceptibility to diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory illness, as well as certain types of cancers. A psychiatric condition which has comorbidity with obesity is depression. This could be caused by the inability to deal with the stresses of life or with self-esteem issues due to the inability to achieve the healthy lifestyle demanded by society. As a result, there is a circular effect when dealing with obesity and depression. As a worldwide view on obesity, Americans seem to have the most. According to a survey done by the National Health and Nutrition Survey (2003-2004) showed that about 32. 2% of adult Americans are obese (Ogden et al., 2006). With such a large portion, approximately one out of three people are obese, it is important to look at the sociological aspects of dealing with this condition. Obesity is not a disease that can be caught, however there are some genetic components which suggest that certain genes may regulate metabolite levels which can impact whether a person becomes obese or not. Stress and overworking due to lack of a stable economy leads to poor eating habits. As Americans, we live in a fast paced, progressive environment which often requires a quick

and specific fix to problems. Due to our hectic schedules, it is hard to fit time in to eat right not to mention fit time to exercise. Fast food and other unhealthy habits provide this outlet in a quick and effective way. The most targeted audience for people who are used to eating fast food would be people with stressful and fast paced occupations such as public service, students, healthcare, etc. Another important factor to consider is the socioeconomic factors associated with the population. People who are in lower socioeconomic classes tend to eat more processed foods which are unhealthy due to the fact that eating healthy can cause a strain on the budget (Rosen-Reynoso et al., 2011). The best ways of preventing obesity are recognizing first that you are living an unhealthy lifestyle. Eating healthy and in proper portions as well as keeping a healthy and active lifestyle such as working out and not smoking, drinking excessively, etc., can keep one from gaining unhealthy weight. In some cases of morbid obesity, surgical methods are required to remove excess fat called liposuction, or they may have a process done called gastric bypass which helps limit their food intake, allowing them to diet properly. In order to promote awareness, there are government advertisements as well as restaurants which provide healthier choices for food and ads to get active. Depression is a condition in which a person has a somber mood and a low activity level. There are different levels of depression and certain criteria have to be met in order to diagnose a person with depression. According to the DSM-IV-TR, a person must feel depressed all the time, undergo periods of hyperactivity/inactivity, loss of energy, inability to think clearly, insomnia/hyperinsomnia, and change in weight (" Major Depressive Episode," 2000). As a result, this can lead to choices which lead to an unhealthy lifestyle. It can lead to a decrease in the

amount of serotonin which is directly related to sleep cycles, eating habits, etc. Depression can cause neurological instability at the chemical level which in turn can influence cognitive and behavioral processes which can lead to bad choices which result in poor mental health. One of the ways of regulating depression is through therapy as well as medication. The type of medication used predominately are SSRIs or selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors which allow greater mood elevation by causing serotonin to remain in the synapse longer than normal. Therapy such as cognitive restructuring can help a person work through internal issues resulting in the depression and can help promote healthier lifestyles and generally improve self esteem/stress related issues. There is no real way to prevent depression from occurring due to the personal nature and how it results from neuroticism between the ideal self and the real self. The government and private companies usually have pilot studies in which they treat people with depression using experimental medication and techniques to see if it has an effect before using in the local population. Obesity and depression are comorbid in that you usually see one with the other, but causality cannot be inferred as it can go both ways. There are current treatment programs which can help provide support for both issues. However, it is important to keep preventive measures in place in order to make sure that these illnesses do not occur. Promoting healthy lifestyles, both physically and mentally, can destroy these conditions in society. References Major Depressive Episode. (2000). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. Arlington: American Psychatric Assocation. Ogden et al., 2006 C. L. Ogden, M. D. Carroll, L. R. Curtin, M. A. McDowell, C. J. Tabak and K. M. Flegal, Prevalence of overweight and obesity in the United States, 1999–2004, Journal of the

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