

OBESITY: A THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

In every efficient society on earth today, those who live easy lives and even those who are poor, are found to be carrying excessive weight. In 2019 and 2020, there were 38 million overweight or obese kids and teenagers between the ages of 5 and 19. Obesity is one of the most serious life-threatening health problems of the 21st century which affects nearly 300 million people worldwide. This article is not to be seen as an attack on people who are obese (fat), but it is an attack on FAT itself. Obesity is one of our leading public health problems.

KEYWORDS: Obesity, Threat and Public Health

INTRODUCTION

The body must, of necessity, have a certain amount of fat. However, to eat as we are eating and to put in our bodies the kinds of poisons that we are ingesting is to act in diametric opposition to the Law of Life itself. This unwanted fat is legislating death to any human being who is overweight. Too much fat in the body is an accumulation of swill (garbage). Excessive fat is an enemy and we must take it as an enemy.

BASIC HABITS TO FORM FOR PERMANENT WEIGHT CONTROL

- Drink less juice or sodas and more water.
- Eat slowly. Take time to enjoy your food.
- Exercise 30-60 minutes daily.
- Eat three meals a day at regular times.
- Eat a hot cereal with fruit. Try and eat breakfast daily.
- Eat lots of foods “as grown”. These are the complex carbohydrate foods, high in fiber and nutrients, yet low in calories and price, and devoid of cholesterol.
- Do not allow harmful substances into your body (alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, drugs, etc).

CASUALTY OF FAT

The first casualty of fat is the physical appearance, which it utterly destroys. It literally distorts the human form, leaving almost no areas of the body untouched. It makes a home in the face, the jaws, the chin, neck, upper back, lower back, arms, abdomen, buttocks, thighs, even wrist, ankles and feet – wherever it can find a resting place, it settles and cripples the useful muscles and organs of the body.

This unnecessary, unwanted, excess fat gathers around the veins and arteries, making it difficult for the blood to flow, carrying life-giving fluid to all parts of the body. It causes the heart to overwork itself. Eventually, this overworking of the heart makes the arteries stiff and brittle. To meet the increased workload, the heart may add muscle fibers, which places an additional burden on it until it is simply unable to continue and fails. Heart disease is the Number One Killer in many developed countries, and on the increase in developing countries. Statistics indicate that heart disease is 3 to 5 times more common among people with hypertension (high blood pressure) (Abubakar, Sanuisi & Ibrahim, 2021). Obesity is a primary contributor to hypertension (Pancar, 2018). Where there is excess fat, there is hypertension and where there is hypertension there is heart attack and death, as well as four times the risk of stroke and damaged kidney.

It is written in the scriptures of the Bible, that Jesus said, “I come that you may have life and have it more abundantly” (John, c10 v10b). It is very common to notice among citizen in almost every country on earth people weighing other than themselves, in regards to living a righteous life and weighing properly, however, in all the churches, schools, mosques, synagogues, and temples today, there are overweight women, overweight children, overweight men (Pole, 2014). There are

young men with huge bellies, not distended from a lack of food, but expanded from too much food and too little exercises.

Overweight people are like ticking bombs waiting for one or more of these diseases to explode in their lives (Ludington & Diehl, 2020). In addition, extra weight affects self-image. In today's appearance-oriented society it can be a great psychological burden.

WHAT CAUSES OBESITY?

Too many calories are the key to the problem. Intake of more calories than the body can use. It is necessary to know that the leftovers of calories from sugar, starch, protein, are turned into fat (Ludington & Diehl, 2020). Blocking of vital oxygen carrying arteries results from fat floating around in the blood. Extra weight shortens life. Every extra pound share about one month from your life span. Sixty extra pounds in other words, can cost you five years.

CALORIES PER GRAM

Fat	-	9
Alcoholic	-	7
Carbohydrate	-	4
Protein	-	4

Seven of the devils that are defining the House (human body) of God are:

(1) Pride (2) Pork (3) Alcohol (4) Tobacco (5) Drugs (6) Red Meat (7) A host of other bad food. Every human being should make a conscious effort to get rid of unwanted fat. Get away from junk food and eat proper food.

Assessment of Obesity

$$\text{Body Man Index} = \frac{\text{Weight (Kg)}}{\text{Height (Mr)}}$$

SIGN AND SYMPTOMS

- Increased weight
- BMI (body man index)
- Inability to breath
- Laziness
- Knock knee

OBESITY AND THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS IN NIGERIA

The world obesity Atlas 2023 report has shown that Nigeria is least prepared to deal with the rising Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and obesity globally. The report shows that Nigeria ranks 180 out of 183 countries on the NCDs Obesity Preparedness Rankings. Rates of overweight and obesity continue to grow in adults and children. According to World Health Organization, obesity has recently emerged as a global public health issue and has almost tripled worldwide since 1975. Obesity and overweight are characterized by abnormal or excessive fat accumulation with significant adverse health implications. A recent study (Fabunmi et al., 2019) showed that an imbalance in energy intake and expenditure, where extra calories consumed are not converted into energy, is a major contributing factor to obesity. A recent study to investigate the factors associated with an imbalance in energy intake (Medvedyuk et al., 2018) has identified dietary habit changes, a sedentary lifestyle, excessive alcohol intake and cigarette smoking, environmental and societal factors, as well as a lack of policies and implementation in several sectors as such factors.

The cost-of-living crisis in Nigeria has the potential to further increase obesity among those already experiencing financial hardship due to inability to purchase healthy foods. A recent study (Okafor et al., 2014) indicated that obesity and overweight are common in our urban dwellers with accompanying regional differences. Attainment of middle age increases the likelihood of urban dwelling Nigerians to become obese. Most Nigerian families already have to choose between cheap and readily available energy-dense foods versus more costly healthier food options. As financial hardship hits, choosing the latter will become more difficult for households with the lowest incomes because they are less able to place long-term considerations on healthy food choices when purchasing food items; they tend to go for quantity instead of quality.

A recent study to investigate the causes of obesity (Abubakar et al., 2021) has identified increased dietary consumption of energy-dense foods, high levels of refined sugar, saturated fats (fast food) and sedentary lifestyles are recognized as some of the major causes of the increased prevalence of obesity in Nigeria. Obesity causes the heart to overwork itself. Eventually, this overworking of the heart makes the arteries stiff and brittle. To meet the increased workload, the heart may add muscle fibers, which places an additional burden on it until it is simply unable to continue and fails. Healthier foods are more expensive than unhealthy food sources and food sources of protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals cost more. As a result, the dietary choices of those on the lowest income are often limited to a low-price, high-energy combination, which in the long term can promote weight gain especially when combined with a sedentary lifestyle. Obesity crisis will be with us for a very long time it major societal challenges, such as financial crisis and climate change are not prioritized. There is therefore the need to institute measures that will check development of obesity early enough while improving the nutritional status of the few who may still be undernourished.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Health promotion and education is very necessary in helping people to fully understand how to eat to live. Let us exercise this wonderful body that gravity is constantly pulling on. That sagging flesh is sagging because we refuse to exercise. The gravity is calling you; gravity is bringing you down. It takes a powerful force to escape the pull of gravity in the earth's atmosphere. The force of life is powerful enough to keep us out of the grave, but we must eat properly and exercise properly.

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