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Title

Obesity is a Problem for the American Population

Introduction

Obesity is a major problem of modern times and is a complex phenomenon with many interconnected factors. Rates of overweight and obese people of all ages have increased significantly worldwide, with the most affected demographic noticeably being young adults. Several factors, such as a sedentary lifestyle, unhealthy dieting habits, and environmental and genetic factors, are common contributors to excessive weight gain. It is generally considered a preventable disease, yet it has become one of the most serious global health crises of the current times. In addition to the obvious physical strain it has on an individual's body, evidence from studies has shown us that people with obesity are more prone to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, increasing isolation in many cases. It has been suggested that different aspects of one's life, such as physical activity level or caloric intake, should be addressed in order to counter this issue.

Body Paragraph 1

Obesity has been a growing issue within the American population for some time now, with approximately 42.4% of adults (over 18 years old) in the U.S. being obese (NIDDK). Furthermore, weight-related issues have seen an increase in younger populations, including adolescents and children. The health risks associated with obesity vary from heart disease and stroke to type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer. Additionally, there is an economic burden caused by obesity that has shaken our nation due to mounting hospital bills, medical costs, and

loss of income. It is clear that without more education to combat this epidemic, something must be done soon to avoid lasting impacts on public health and its financial costs.

Obesity has become a major issue for the American population and has achieved the status of an epidemic with adverse impacts extended to physical, physiological, social, and economic well-being.

Obesity increases an individual's risk for a range of physical health conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, heart disease, cancer, arthritis, sleep apnea, and infertility. People who are overweight or obese are also more likely to experience musculoskeletal problems such as joint pain and low back pain. Furthermore, research suggests that these conditions can significantly decrease an individual's quality of life by limiting their mobility and ability to perform activities of everyday living. The mental health impacts associated with obesity are also present and are often overlooked but should not be underestimated. Research shows that people with obesity are at an increased risk for depression due to factors like bullying or discrimination from peers and family members. As highlighted by Littleberry, "people with obesity had a 55 percent increased risk of developing depression over time, while people who were depressed had a 58 percent increased risk of developing obesity." (Littleberry) Additionally, many people with obesity experience feelings of shame or guilt, which can further exacerbate their mental health issues. Furthermore, people with obesity may have difficulty finding work due to discrimination in the workplace or lack of self-confidence stemming from negative body image issues.

The social consequences associated with obesity can be significant as well. People who are obese may be subjected to discrimination from friends and family members who do not

understand the complexities behind weight gain or perceive it as solely due to an individual's lack of self-control or poor lifestyle choices (Anekwe et al.). Additionally, people who are obese may have difficulty forming relationships due to feelings of self-consciousness about their appearance or perceived judgment from others. Finally, serious economic ramifications are associated with obesity in the U.S. population. As highlighted in the research, "The total cost of chronic diseases due to American obesity and overweight was \$1.72 trillion—equivalent to 9.3 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product" (Waters and Graf). Indirect costs associated with absenteeism due to illness can also add up quickly, resulting in lost productivity in both personal and professional settings alike.

The United States currently has the highest rate of obesity globally. This is largely attributed to the sedentary lifestyle of much of its population and its generally high consumption of unhealthy, processed foods with high sugar and fat content. There is a multitude of reasons why this might be, but most come down to two primary factors: access to unhealthy food and a lack of physical activity. The food industry in America heavily contributes to the problem by selling calorie-dense, nutrient-deficient products at surprisingly low prices, making them enticing and accessible for individuals living on limited budgets. As highlighted by Collins, "Refined grains, starchy vegetables, and added sugars still account for 42 percent of the average American's daily calories" (Collins). Additionally, many people have adopted sedentary jobs and lifestyles due to various employment opportunities and modern conveniences such as driving or utilizing more labor-saving machines. Therefore, it is clear that both lifestyle choices and economic accessibility are major contributors to higher levels of obesity in the United States.

While obesity is a major problem, many believe it to be resolved through the measures taken within the United States. In recent years, United States health officials have been increasingly concerned about the epidemic of obesity in the country. The prevalence of obesity has long-term health and economic implications for the nation's population. To combat this growing problem, governments have introduced a variety of policies and initiatives, such as public health campaigns, food labeling reforms, restrictions on marketing to children, updated physical activity guidelines, and subsidies for fresh fruits and vegetables. Additionally, some states have gone further by imposing taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages. Taxes have also been applied on sugary beverages to make it difficult to purchase such items, resulting in an overall withdrawal. Certain regions within the United States have shown a decrease in the number of obesity cases. While the arguments are viable, these do not account for the overall condition within the United States. Obesity is a major issue in the United States, yet measures to reduce it are proving ineffective. Research suggests that attempts to focus solely on individual behavior may be overlooking more pervasive and deep-rooted causes of the epidemic. Key contributing factors to obesity include genetic predisposition, lack of access to health education and resources, poverty, and population behaviors influenced by food marketing tactics. In order to really address the underlying causes of obesity in the United States, it ultimately seems necessary for public policy solutions that go beyond traditional approaches. This could involve incentivizing healthy eating habits through tax reform or additional government regulations on investments in health education initiatives and programs. As such, a multi-faceted approach that targets multiple levels of influence may lead to more successful outcomes.

Obesity is a serious public health issue that has far-reaching consequences for individuals and society at large. These include physical health issues such as chronic disease; psychological impacts such as depression; social implications including stigma and discrimination; and economic burdens like medical costs and lost productivity due to absenteeism from work or school. The current dynamics of the United States, such as the sale of high-fat and sugary foods, make it even more difficult for obesity to be controlled in a viable way. It is clear that there needs to be greater awareness around this issue so that people can start taking steps toward solving this growing problem before it reaches epidemic proportions in our country's population.



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