
Comment on the obesity issue

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Dear editors,

I would like to make the following comments to the article "Patterns of body weight in middle-aged and older Americans, by gender and race, 1993-2000" by KR Jenkins, NH Fultz, SJ Fonda, LA Wray.

This article presents detailed data on the development of body weight. Included into the analysis is race but not socio-economic status. It is well-known that both race and socio-economic status are linked with body weight. Thus interpretation of these data is impossible and the detailed tables should not have been published. The authors' discussion includes the same criticism of their data: "The relatively

high BMI status of minority group members has been noted previously Given the complex, multifactorial nature of overweight and obesity (Aronne 1998), more research on the biological, social, environmental, and cultural determinants and outcomes of weight gain or loss is needed." So why did they only stratify for race or gender? If socio-economic status is more important than race (a well-grounded hypothesis but needing further clarification) this data would mislead preventive action towards racial bias instead of addressing socio-economic problems.

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References

Jenkins KR, Fultz NH, Fonda SJ, Wray LA (2003). Patterns of body weight among middle-aged and older Americans, by gender and race, 1993-2000. Soz Präventiv Med 48: 257-68.

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