

New obesity data paints a bleak future for adults

Strictly embargoed until 12.01am Wednesday 17 February 2010

Obesity trends among adults in England are continuing to increase according to an analysis by the National Heart Forum of the most recent data from the Health Survey for England. The future burden of cardiovascular disease attributable to obesity is predicted to increase substantially.

The National Heart Forum report, published today (Wednesday 17 February 2010), "*A prediction of Obesity Trends for Adults and their associated diseases: Analysis from the Health Survey for England 1993-2007*" [1] is an update of the trends presented in the Foresight obesity report (2007) [2].

The report compares previous forecasts of obesity prevalence based on Health Survey for England (HSE) data from 1993 to 2004 (published in the Foresight Report Tackling Obesity [2]), to updated forecasts based on data from 1993 to 2007.

The team of experts, led by Professor Klim McPherson at Oxford University who is Chair of the National Heart Forum, conducted the analysis by preparing forecasts up to 2020 for overweight and obesity levels among adults.

The updated 2020 forecasts are in line with the forecasts made in 2007 and show no improvement in predicted trends. The updated analysis shows the predicted proportion of adults who will be obese aged 20-65 is 41% for men, and 36% for women. In the 40-65 age group, the predictions are 44% for men and 38% for women. The predicted proportion of adults who will be overweight aged 20-65 is 40% for men and 32% for women. In the 40-65 age group, the updated predictions are that 40% of men and 32% of women will be overweight.

Importantly, the team also updated their predictions for the burdens of diseases that are attributable to obesity. Their analysis shows that if these trends continue there will be a substantial increase in cardiovascular diseases. By 2050, they predict a 23% rise in the prevalence of obesity-related stroke, a 34% rise in obesity-related hypertension, a 44% rise in obesity-related coronary heart disease and a 98% rise in obesity-related diabetes.

Commenting on the report, Professor Klim McPherson, said:

"These trends demonstrate that the cautiously optimistic picture we presented in November 2009 for a levelling off of future obesity rates among children is not mirrored in adults. There are already more men who are obese than who are of a healthy weight and by the end of the decade obese men and women could outnumber those who are overweight.[3] The serious health problems associated with obesity mean that these continuing rising trends will impose a substantially increased burden on the NHS.

The Government needs to redouble its efforts to tackle obesity. We are being overwhelmed by the effects of today's 'obesogenic' environment, with its abundance of energy dense food and sedentary lifestyles."

-ends-

Press Contacts

Media contact Tim Marsh (M) 0778 663 6441 or 0207 383 7638

or call Tom Byatt on 0207 383 7638

Notes to editors

1. A prediction of Obesity Trends for Adults and their associated diseases. Analysis from the Health Survey for England 1993-2007. McPherson K, Brown M, Marsh T and Byatt T. (2010). Available to download from <http://www.heartforum.org.uk/>
2. Foresight Tackling Obesity: Future Choices - Modelling Future Trends in Obesity and their impact on Health. McPherson K, Marsh T and Brown M (2007). Government Office for Science. Available to download at <http://www.foresight.gov.uk/>
3. Obesity is calculated as a body mass index of >30. Overweight is calculated at between 25 and 30. Healthy weight is calculated at between 20 and 25.