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The normalisation of overweight and obesity in Australia



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Background: The majority of the Australian population (63%) are overweight or obese. Surprisingly, many of these people do not self-identify as being above a healthy weight range. This normalisation of overweight and obesity presents a challenge to public health professionals.

LiveLighter: examined the self-perceptions of weight status and the level of concern of those who are overweight or obese. Key findings will be discussed.

Methods: *LiveLighter*: commissioned the Heart Foundation to conduct an online survey on 2,012 Australian adults aged 25–49 years. Participants were categorised according to their weight: normal weight (BMI < 25); overweight (BMI 25.00–29.99) or obese (BMI > 30). Participants were asked if they thought they were: “average weight”; “overweight” or “very overweight or obese”. Additionally, participants who were obese (BMI > 30) were asked to rank their level of concern about body weight: “not at all concerned”; “a little concerned”; “somewhat concerned” and “extremely concerned”.

Results: Only one in four (25%) obese participants described themselves as being either “very overweight or obese”. One in eight (13%) of obese participants reported they thought they were “average weight”.

Only one in two (50%) participants who were overweight described themselves as being “overweight or very overweight or obese”.

Over one third (38%) of obese participants reported they were “not at all concerned or only a little concerned” about their weight. With one third (35%) of obese participants reporting they were “extremely concerned” about their weight.

Conclusion: Our findings demonstrate that a high proportion of overweight/obese individuals self-identify as being in a lower BMI category. Interestingly this trend was higher in obese respondents. A high proportion of obese individuals indicated little or no concern about their weight. This suggests the normalisation of being overweight or obese and presents a challenge for public health campaigns and health professionals.

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Physical activity, adiposity and functional vascular parameters in preschool aged children: a cross-sectional study



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Purpose: In adults and school-aged children, physical activity is inversely associated with adiposity and cardiovascular disease risk. However, in children ≤ 5 years, these relationships remain unclear. This study aimed to determine if objectively-assessed physical activity is associated with measures of adiposity and vascular function in 4 year-old children.

Method: A cross-sectional study of 467 children (mean age 4.0 ± 0.4 years) participating in the Barwon Infant birth cohort study (*n* = 1074 infants). Participants wore an accelerometer for seven days. Mean overall? duration and durations accumulated in bouts ≥ 1 min of light-intensity (LPA), moderate- to vigorous (MVPA) and light-vigorous-intensity (LMVPA) (hours/day) were computed. Adiposity was assessed by BMI z-score, waist circumference z-score, triceps z-score, subscapular skin fold z-score, and %body fat. Pulse wave velocity (m/sec) and systolic/diastolic blood pressure percentile were calculated for age, sex and percentile height. Linear regression between physical activity and vascular parameters were adjusted for accelerometer wear time and maternal education. Analyses with pulse wave velocity were adjusted for age and sex, and analysis with LPA were adjusted for time in MVPA.

Results: Overall duration and duration of bouts ≥ 1 min of MVPA were associated with less adiposity, whereas LPA accumulated in bouts was associated with higher adiposity. Overall duration and duration of bouts of LPA accumulated in ≥ 1 min were associated with lower systolic blood pressure (95%CI: –6.6 to –0.4 mmHg and 9.3 to –1.3 mmHg, respectively) and lower PWV (95%CI: –0.2 to –0.01 m/s and –0.3 to –0.004 m/s, respectively). MVPA was not associated with vascular outcomes; and LMVPA was not associated with any outcomes.

Conclusions: Findings from this study highlight the potential importance of LPA to cardiovascular function and MVPA to adiposity during early life. LPA was associated with more adiposity but lower blood pressure and slower pulse wave velocity. Future research should consider LPA and MVPA in addition to total physical activity.

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A systematic review of the extent and influence of price promotions on consumer purchasing in food and beverage retail settings



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Objective: Public health groups have recommended that government restrict price promotions on unhealthy foods and bev-