

Introduction

Prevalence and Causes of Weight Stigma

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“A Pledge to End the Social Stigma of Obesity”
King's College London
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OPEN

Joint international consensus statement for ending stigma of obesity

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People with obesity commonly face a pervasive, resilient form of social stigma. They are often subject to discrimination in the workplace as well as in educational and healthcare settings. Research indicates that weight stigma can cause physical and psychological harm, and that affected individuals are less likely to receive adequate care. For these reasons, weight stigma deve

>100 Endorsing Organizations

www.pledge2endobesitystigma.org

PLEDGE TO END OBESITY STIGMA

We pledge

- To treat individuals with overweight and obesity with dignity and respect.
- To refrain from using stereotypical language, images, and narratives that unfairly and inaccurately depict individuals with overweight and obesity as lazy, gluttonous, and lacking willpower or self-discipline.
- To encourage and support educational initiatives aimed at eradicating weight bias through dissemination of current knowledge of obesity and body-weight regulation.
- To encourage and support initiatives aimed at preventing weight discrimination in the workplace, education, and healthcare settings.

www.pledge2endobesitystigma.org

Causes of Weight-Based Stigma

Causes and contributors of weight stigma/discrimination

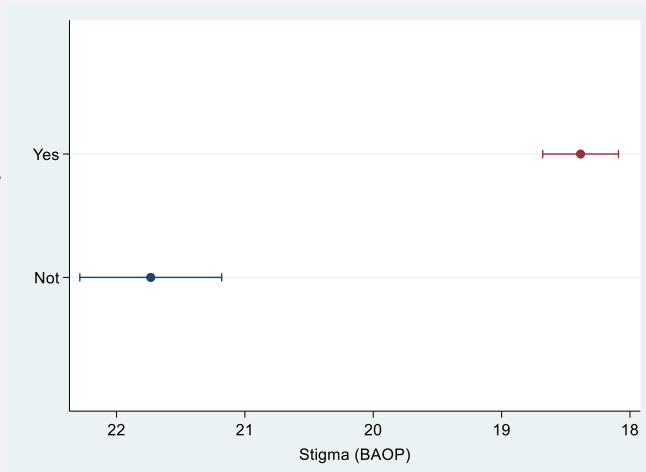
“The idea that the causes of obesity depend on individuals’ faults, such as laziness and gluttony, provides the foundation for stigma against obesity”

Joint International Consensus Statement. Nature Medicine 2020

ASK Study: Stigmatizing Views & Treatment

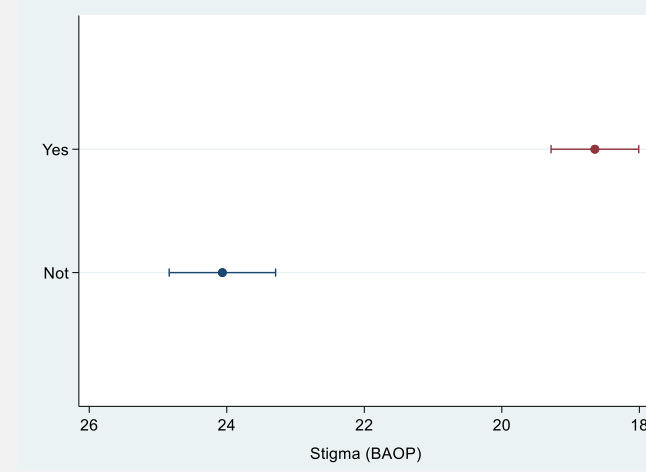
Association between stigmatizing views and opinion that **obesity** could be cured by commitment to follow a healthy lifestyle

General Population



Increasing stigma →

Healthcare Professionals



Increasing stigma →

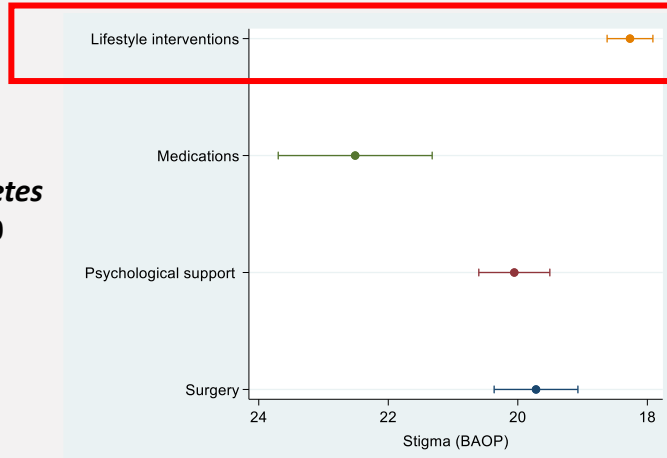
O'Keefe et al
*The Lancet Diabetes
& Endocrin.* 2020

In Gen. Pop and HCPs those that consider obesity to be curable through a commitment to a healthy lifestyle have more stigmatizing views

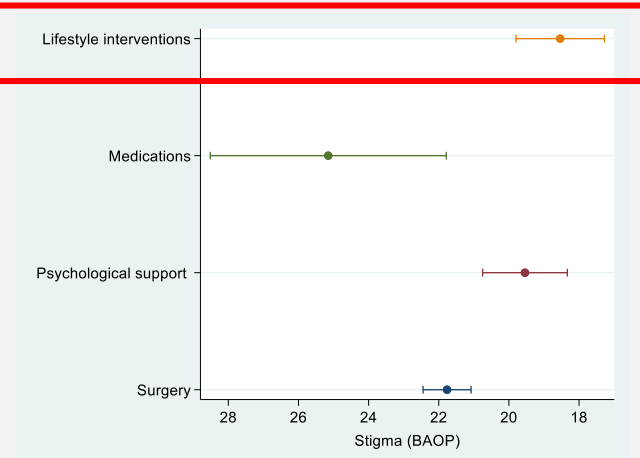
ASK Study: Stigmatizing Views & Treatment

Association between between stigmatizing views (as measured by BAOP) and opinion on most effective treatment for **severe obesity (BMI >35 kg/m²)**

General Population



Healthcare Professionals



O'Keefe et al
*The Lancet Diabetes
& Endocrin.* 2020

Increasing stigma

Increasing stigma

In Gen Pop. and HCPs those that consider lifestyle intervention to be the most effective treatment for severe obesity have more stigmatizing views

Naïve Biology:

A set of concepts and cognitive processes that help us understand biological phenomena.

> Children are able to draw causal inferences that are specific to biological entities

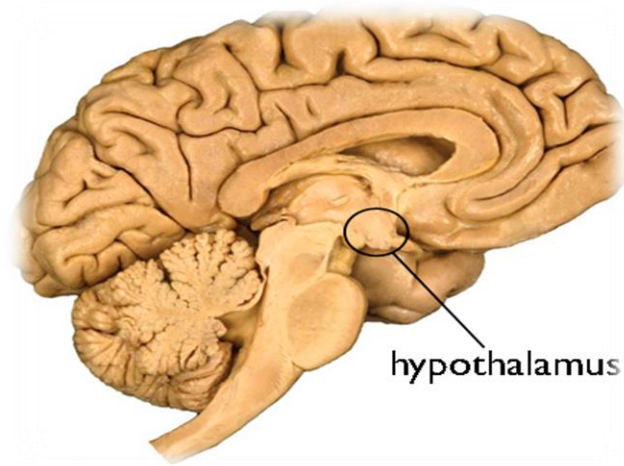
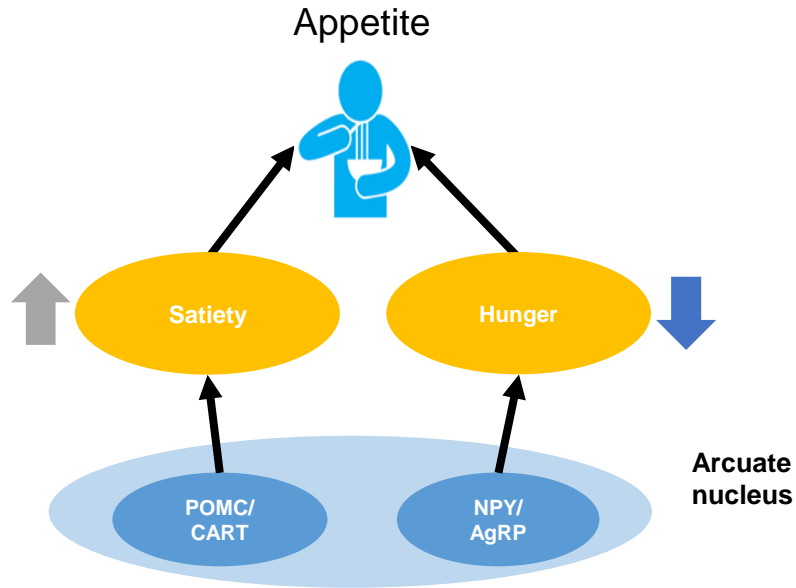
ENERGY HOMEOSTASIS



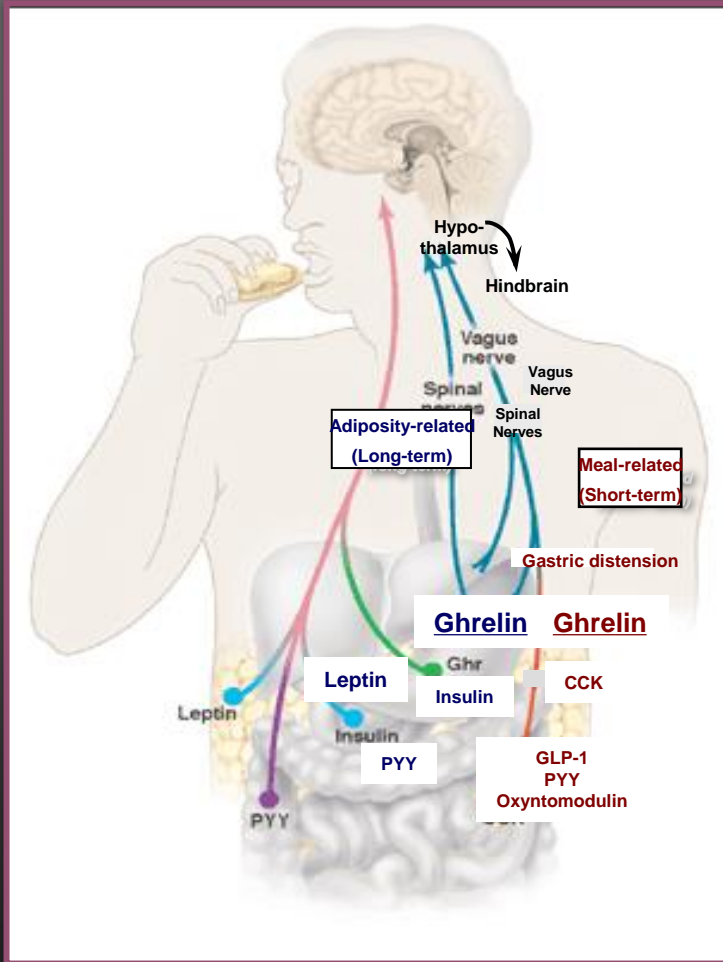
Is obesity really a volitional problem?

Regulation of Appetite: Is it Volitional?

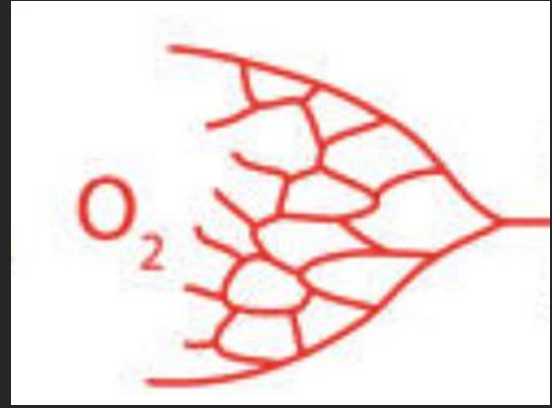
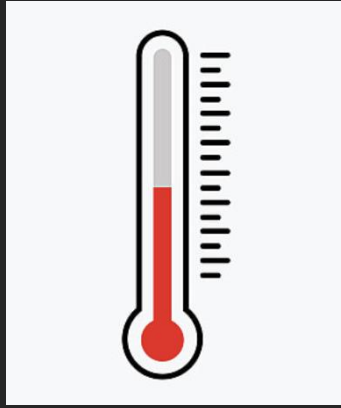
- Arcuate nucleus



AgRP, Agouti-related peptide; CART, cocaine- and amphetamine-regulated transcript; NPY, neuropeptide Y; POMC, pro-opiomelanocortin
Secher *et al. J Clin Invest* 2014;124:4473–88; van Can *et al. Int J Obes (Lond)* 2014;38:784–93



Adapted from
Marx J,
Science 299:846, 2003



Animation

Evoking Empathy

51% of people with obesity are stigmatized because of their weight.

SHAME! **JUDGEMENT**

DIET PLAN

NOT TRYING!

REJECTED **REJECTED** **REJECTED** **REJECTED** **REJECTED** **REJECTED** **REJECTED** **REJECTED**

What causes obesity?

COMPLEX

BIOLOGY

ENERGY OUT

20-30%

70-80%

100+ SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS

Please join us and sign the pledge. Together, we can end weight stigma

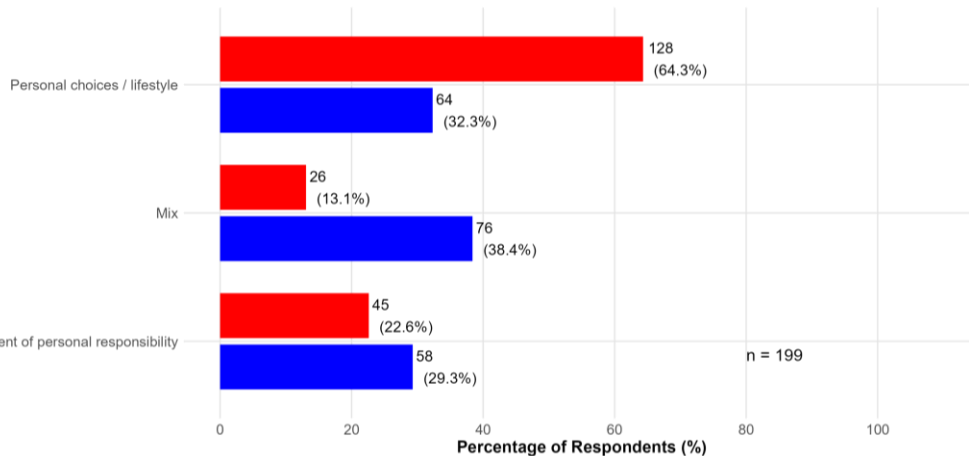
Explaining Biology

What do you believe is the main cause of obesity?

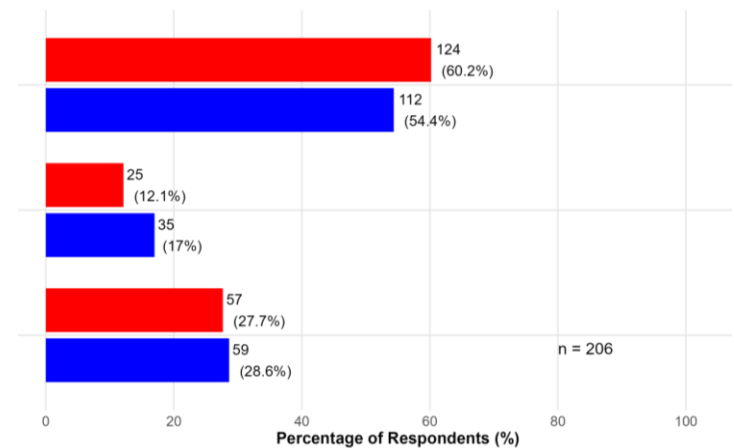
Respondents with Obesity ($BMI > 30 \text{ Kg/m}^2$)

Biology video vs Empathy group (Q14 and Q32)

Biology Animation Video



Empathy Animation Video



Exposure



Current Definition of Obesity

*“A condition of excess adiposity that poses a **risk** to health”*



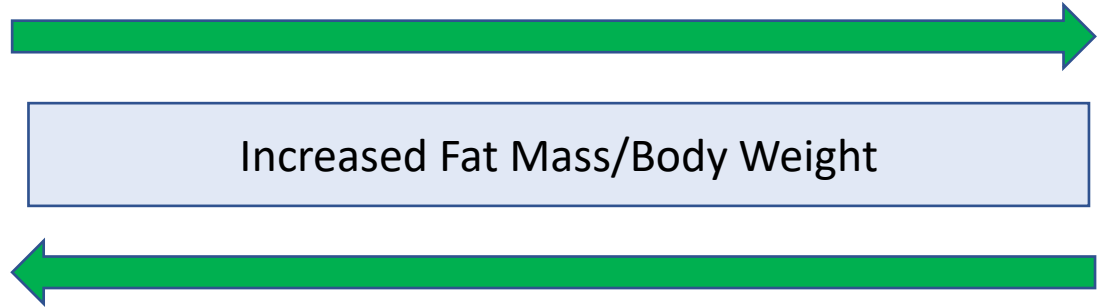
Physical phenotype



Health Impact



Widespread Assumption
that Volitional Control of
Weight is Bidirectional,
No Matter the Severity
of Obesity

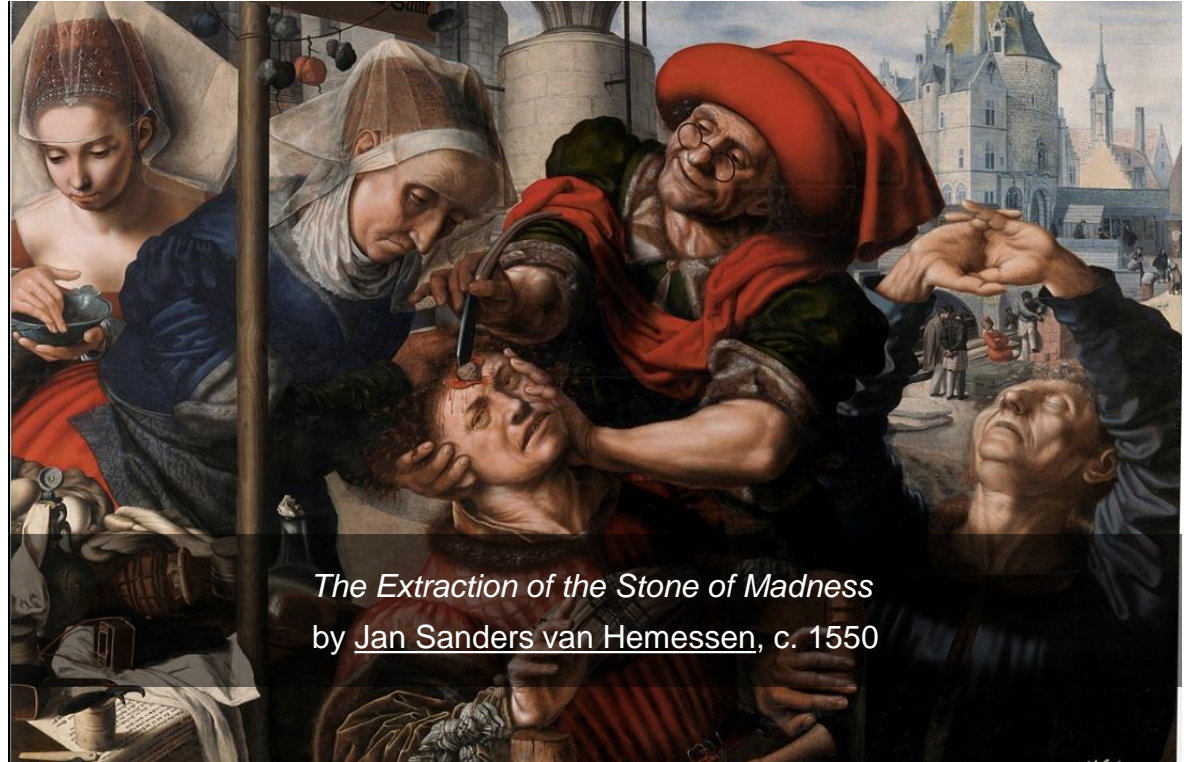




Quackery and Obesity



The Charlatan
by Pietro Longhi (1757)




The Extraction of the Stone of Madness
by Jan Sanders van Hemessen, c. 1550

The “Utilitarian”
Argument used define
obesity as a disease
contributes to
controversy



Obesity is a Disease



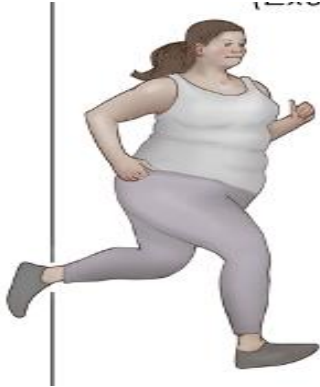
Obesity is NOT a Disease

The bottom panel features a 3D-style megaphone icon, identical to the one in the top panel, pointing towards the left. It is positioned on the right side of the bottom panel, with motion lines suggesting sound or air being blown out.

Rugby Star Iona Maher: Defying BMI Criticism With Olympic Glory

Champion faces and overcomes weight critics at 2024 Paris Olympics

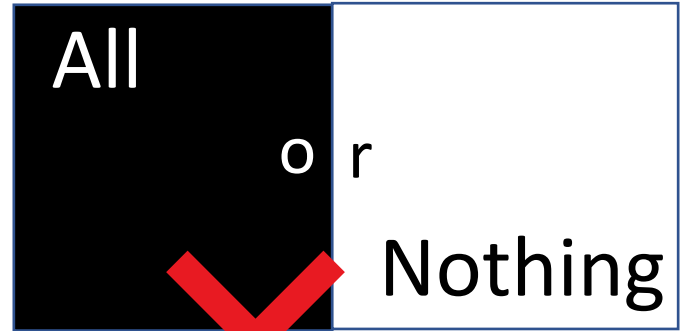
[Judy Rotich](#) | Aug 3, 2024



Obesity and Health



Disease or no Disease.....



Lancet DE Commission on Clinical Obesity

THE LANCET
Diabetes & Endocrinology



KING'S HEALTH PARTNERS

An Academic Health Sciences Centre for London

Pioneering better health for all

Clinical Diagnosis, Biological Diagnosis and Physical Phenotype



Obesity (Excess Adiposity)

Preserved Health

(Variable) Risk

**Illness
(Clinical Obesity)**

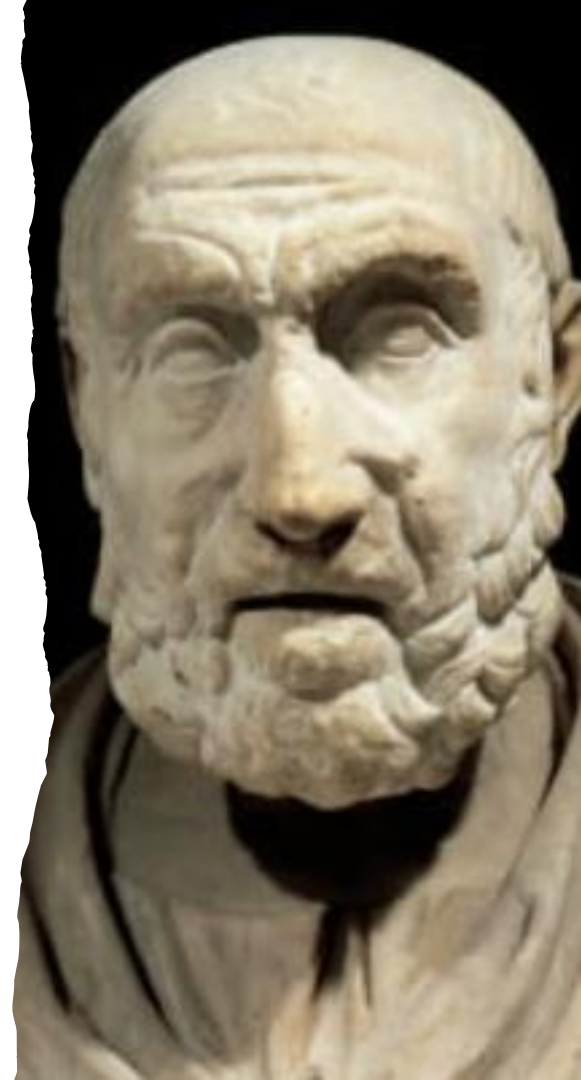
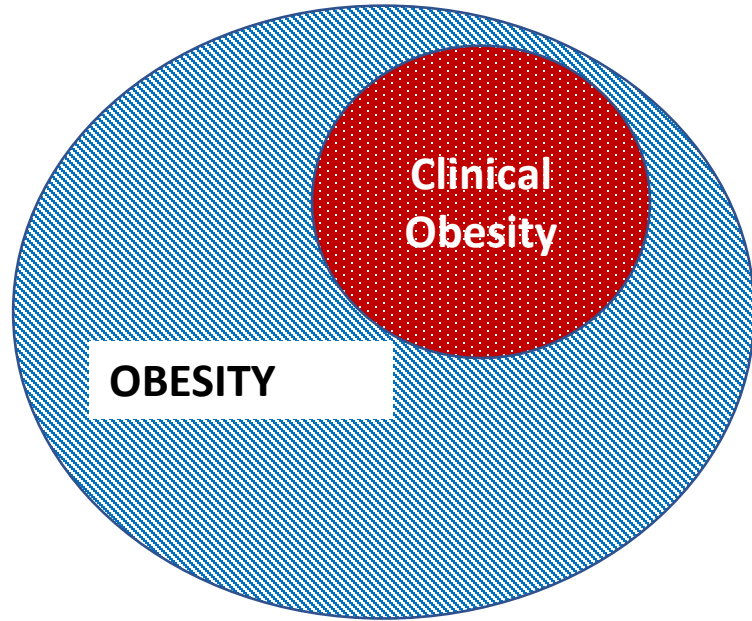
Issue

**PHYSICAL
PHENOTYPE**

adiposity-related risk
exists as a continuum
CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS

Health & Illness are
objective, binary conditions

“Medicalize Obesity”





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