



Human Obesity: A Background

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ABSTRACT Obesity has emerged as the most prevalent serious public health problem of our time. It is a condition of excessive fat accumulation in adipose tissue, to the extent that health may be impaired. Certain detrimental effects to health are attributed to obesity. Obesity may develop at any age in either sex. Several factors may contribute to the development of obesity. Obesity develops over time and, once it develops, is difficult to treat. Obesity should not be regarded simply as a cosmetic problem affecting certain individuals, but a crisis that threatens global well being. An estimated 300 million people around the world are obese. The International Obesity Task Force (IOTF) conservative estimates, based on current trends, show that obesity levels will continue to rise in the early 21st century - with severe health consequences unless urgent action is taken now. It is half a century since obesity was introduced into the international classification of diseases. In the 21st century it has become an epidemic. The links between overweight and obesity and a range of other serious diseases from diabetes and heart disease to cancer are now more clearly understood, yet little is being done to tackle this world-wide problem effectively. Obesity levels in some countries have doubled in recent years and are rising in developing countries like India too. The consequences of ignoring obesity are increasing levels of serious illness and rising health costs.

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