



Obesity Among Black South African Women

Thandi Puoane, Hazel Bradley and Gail D. Hughes

KEYWORDS Obesity. Black African Women. South Africa. Urbanisation. Developing Country

ABSTRACT Obesity and associated non-communicable diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and ischaemic heart disease were previously thought to be diseases of affluent countries, but they are becoming increasingly prevalent in developing nations. Accessibility to cheap unhealthy food, global trade and market development influence nutrition transition towards diets with high fat and sugar contents. A decrease in physical activity due to urbanization and other environmental factors such as crime and violence are thought to lead to an increased risk of obesity. Positive beliefs about body weight among black African women, together with the idea of association of thinness with HIV/AIDS virus infection are believed to fuel the obesity epidemic amongst this population. This paper describes some of the contributory factors which black South African women are faced with in making choices about healthy living. A multisectoral approach will be needed to fight the epidemic of obesity and associated diseases.

Authors' Address: Thandi Puoane, Hazel Bradley and Gail D. Hughes, School of Public Health, University of Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

© Kamla-Raj 2005
Human Ecology Special Issue No., 13: 91-95 (2005)

Human Obesity: A Major Health Burden
Kaushik Bose, Guest Editor