

Beliefs about Obesity among Parents, Peers and Teachers of Adolescents from Punjab, India

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ABSTRACT The present study was undertaken exclusively at Ludhiana city to assess the attitude of parents, peers and teachers of obese and non-obese adolescents about obesity. The sample consisted of 160 adolescents (between 13 to 19 years of age), their parents (mothers: 80 and fathers: 80), randomly selected classmates (n: 80) and teachers (n: 40). Half of the sample (n: 80) consisted of randomly selected normal-weight adolescents, equally distributed over the two sexes (girls: 40 and boys: 40). The other half of the sample consisted of obese adolescents (n: 80), distributed equally over the two sexes (girls: 40 and boys: 40). Beliefs were evaluated by administering a scale prepared by Rudd Institute, Yale University (2004). The belief pattern common to all the four groups of respondents included was that obesity is caused by those factors (*psychological and biological reasons*) which are not under control of an obese individual. The causative factors of obesity that involve self-control (*life style reasons*) were voted for by relatively less number of respondents. The belief pattern tends to convey that to be an obese is due to the reasons not under the control of the individual and hence the individual cannot be held responsible for it.