Overweight and Obesity - A Global Problem

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**Abstract**

This paper mainly concerned about a global problem which is Overweight and Obesity. The paper discusses and elaborates every side of the problem. In this paper, the readers have been briefed with the core concept of obesity and its actual meaning. Beyond that, size, nature and distribution of the problem have been analyzed with the evaluation of leading determinants/factors that cause the problem all over the world. Further, the paper provides an in-depth view of the crucial barriers that build walls in the prevention of obesity and overweight while the potential opportunities for prevention of the problem with a brief conclusion are also one of the main phases/parts of this paper.

**Introduction**

In the current time where even every individual can be found struggling with several issues and diseases which lead to increase their weight for more than it needs to be. The terms Obesity and Overweight are defined as;

The excessive and/or abnormal accumulation of fat or fatness which can impair the health of an individual. According to (World Health Organisation, 2014) they are mainly and highly critical risk factors for several chronic diseases, such as cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

After the concern has been recognized as a problem in the society, the overweight and obesity took a dramatic decrease and coming on to the low level, mostly in the high income and developed nations and countries, while it can be found on the rising in low income and under developing countries (Prentice, 2006).

In adults, obesity and overweight are classified through a simple index called index of weight for height. This index is officially known as BM (Body Mass Index) which is the most commonly used tool for this particular purpose. Beyond that, according to the World Health Organization (WHO),

**In adults;**

* If the BMI of a person is greater than or equal to 25 then it is considered as overweight.
* While, if a BMI is greater than or equal to 30 then it would be considered as obesity. Or in simple words, a BMI equals to or higher is obesity.

**In children (aged under 5 years),**

* Based on the WHO Child Growth Standards, if the BMI is greater than 2 standard deviations then it is considered as overweight.
* While, if the BMI is greater than 3 standard deviations then it is considered as obesity.

**In children (aged between 5 to 19 years),**

* If the BMI for age is greater than 1 standard deviation above the WHO GR medium then it is overweight.
* It would be obesity if the BMI for age is greater than 2 standard deviations above the WHO GR medium (World Health Organisation, 2014).

**Size, Nature and Distribution of the Problem**

Obesity and overweight are the problems which are increasing at a rapid pace in the United States. In some regions around the world, the issues are considered the most common. The main cause(s) of obesity and overweight are the increased amount of fat cells in the human body.

For more than a few decades, human beings are continuously struggling to decrease the scarcity of food, disease and hostile environment. With the industrial revolution, the main and great powers or authorities recognized and understood that increasing body size (obesity and overweight) in humans than the average was a crucial social, economic, and political problem. In the economic and military countries, the critical dependence is on the weight and body size of the young generation from which the workers, professional, and soldiers are drawn. This is one of the most crucial and important issues on global economic development is even entirely dependent on the competencies and skills as well as on the health of human resources (Prentice, 2006).

Based on the analysis of the data came from several sources, the existence of obesity has been found in more than 23.7% of men on international level while it is 26% in the women where huge amount of individuals struggling with obesity can be found in the low income and under developing countries (Ng, et.al, 2014). Beyond that, the presence of overweight is higher in men than of the women. All around the world, the prevalence of overweight exists in around 34.3% men while this is found up to 18.4% in women which is comparatively a lower rate than the men.

Obesity is a more complex issue and disease in comparison with the issue of overweight. Obesity is complex with several etiology and factors such as physiological machinist, psychological factors, foetal Programmation, physical activities, food production, environmental, behavioural, and social factors and context (Caballero, 2007). Beyond that, the main reasons behind the issues of obesity and overweight also include the increased ages, unbalanced and poorly managed dietary habits, poor and lower education, lack of awareness, and physical inactivity. These are the most highlighted correlates of obesity and overweight on the global level.

Based on the geographic analysis, the disease of obesity and overweight mostly witnesses in Mexico (North), USA, and minorities in the UK (East). While according to the political division, Portugal and the US are the two most affected regions by the problem of obesity and overweight. But the disease exists in the people of the regions whose income levels are comparatively lower than of most of the citizens as well as most of them are jobless and unemployed.

**Leading Determinants/Causes**

There is no only one thing, determinant, or cause that leads to the problem or disease of obesity and overweight. While there are many factors involved. Based on a view to the historical context and background, obesity and overweight were many rare wonders under the later path of the 20th century. This was because of the reason that most of the population was much likely to suffer from weight deficits, and increased body weights were typically connected with improved health (Prentice, 2006). With time, the view has been changed when the rates of obesity and overweight climb sharply in the last two decades.

Almost at the initial stage/level, the cause(s) of increased body weight and even size is fully and well understood. People gain more than the normal weight when the used calories exceed those of the expended. But this cannot be considered the only one leading factor or determinant and that is the real gaps witnessed in our understanding about the leading determinants of obesity and overweight (Finkelstein, Ruhm, & Kosa, 2005). Hence, several factors or determinants are there which are considered as the leading ones in obesity and overweight. Those determinants/factors are, but not only;

1. Shifts and huge changes in the economic factors that postdate the increase in the rates of obesity than the normal
2. Poor and unhealthy quality of diet and food as well as wrongly manage and unbalanced dietary patterns and schedules
3. Genetics and actual and sexual life interaction
4. Chronic diseases associated with obesity and overweight.
5. Enhanced and highly increased intakes of the energy from saturated, animals, and trans-fats which are highly linked with the weight gain. (Especially in overweight women).
6. Huge changes in the usage of calories on a daily basis.
7. Reductions in the expenditures of energy and increase in the intake of energy from poly-saturated fats and items (mentioned/listed above on number, 5)
8. Major causes and results of increased consumption of foods and unhealthy items
9. Energy imbalances that lead to more storage of fat by the human body (Finkelstein, Ruhm, & Kosa, 2005).
10. Improper medical conditions and ineffective medications especially in developing nations (Prentice, 2006).

**Barriers in Prevention**

There are several barriers and troubles that lead to the prevention of disease and issues of obesity and overweight. But some of the most critical and highly noticed are listed and explained below.

* **Physical Problems**

Physical problems such as by born fatness and physical unfitness are the barriers which do not allow individuals for physical exercises etc. Hence, no involvement in physical activities and exercises lead to overweight and obesity (Malik, Willett, & Hu, 2013).

* **Lack of Motivation**

Motivation is one of the best ways and methods to prevent obesity and overweight. Through the motivation, individuals can be motivated towards the benefits of the smart and less weighted human body as well as their benefits for the person while performing any job, task, or routine activity. Here, the most noticed barriers are lack of strong perseverance and lack of priorities for weight loss.

* **Lack of Work and Activities**

The lack of work and engagement in activities can be considered the most critical barriers in the prevention of obesity and overweight. No individual (man or woman) can be saved from obesity and overweight if he/she does not get engaged in physical activities and work practices (Malik, Willett, & Hu, 2013). Hence, this barrier creates most of the issues in preventing obesity and overweight.

* **Lack of Time**

Lack of time is also an important barrier to be noticed in the prevention of obesity and overweight on the local and international (global) level. Time becomes an issue especially when individuals have no possibility of mobility and devotion to the particular/prescribed routines in the place of work or workplace.

**Opportunities for Prevention**

**For Early Infancy:**

Growth Monitoring: Education of parents about the growth percentiles, charts, and their actual meanings.

Infant Feeding Mode: Educating parents on satiety cues, supporting breastfeeding as a preferred source for the nutrition of infant, and educating parents regarding formulas of feeding infant (Swinburne, & Wood, 2013).

Sleep and Distress Parental Regulation: Education of parents on manners and sleep durations and assisting them regarding response to infant crying and usage of non-food items (Popkin, 2006).

**For Adults:**

Health Guidelines: Guidelines that serve as the basis for developing and implementing physical and healthy eating practices and policies.

Community Guide: The presence of Obesity and overweight prevention and control programs and policies for the community/communities for controlling obesity (World Health Organisation, 2014).

Physical Activities: availability of several easily doable and highly productive physical activities to be done on a daily basis.

Transitional Feeding: Use of healthy dietary and avoidance of foods added with sugar and salt is also an opportunity for us to save ourselves from obesity and overweight (Swinburne, & Wood, 2013).

**Conclusion**

After an in-depth analysis of the concern “Overweight and Obesity - A Global Problem”, it has been concluded that the problem exists with a huge presence in even every corner of the world. This can be witnessed in the East, West, North, and South of the globe. Beyond that, the problem of overweight and obesity exist in both children and adults of both genders. Furthermore, it has also been concluded that no few nor a single factor is there which causes obesity and overweight while a number of determinants exist. In terms of barriers and opportunities in preventing obesity and overweight, we must have some trouble that creates an issue in preventing this global problem but potential opportunities are also there on the other side which can be utilized to prevent the problem of obesity and overweight.

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