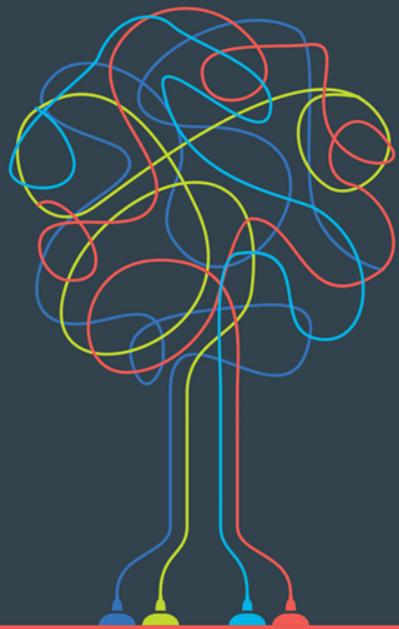


Understanding Obesity: Weight Bias and Its Consequences



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What is Weight Bias?

- Negative attitudes toward individuals with obesity
- Stereotypes leading to:
 - stigma**
 - rejection**
 - prejudice**
 - discrimination**
- Verbal, physical, relational, cyber
- Subtle or overt



Weight Bias in the Media



- Stereotypical portrayals
- Abundant but often ignored
- Reinforces social acceptability of bias
- Affects public perceptions about obesity

Weight Bias In Employment

Population Studies

Experimental Research



Inequitable hiring practices
Prejudice from employers
Lower wages
Disciplinary action
Wrongful job termination



Healthcare Providers Express Bias Against People with Obesity

Non compliant

Lazy

Lacking in self-control

Awkward

Weak-willed

Sloppy

Unsuccessful

Unintelligent

Dishonest

Ferrante et al., 2009; Campbell et al., 2000; Fogelman et al., 2002; Foster, 2003; Hebl & Xu, 2001; Price et al., 1987; Puhl & Heuer, 2009; Huizinga et al., 2010

Weight Bias Matters Because:

- It's no different from any other bigotry
- Violation of human dignity
- Dehumanizes people
- Waste of Human Potential
- Barrier to overcoming obesity



Expect for our Biases, Obesity is much like other Diseases:

- Biology is the dominant driver
- Environment shapes biological responses
 - Food supply
 - Microbes
 - Barriers to physical activity
 - Trauma and stressors
 - Environmental pollution
 - Many other factors
- Personal choices can help or hurt

Impact on Care

Patients with obesity are less likely to obtain...

- Preventive health services & exams
- Cancer screens, pelvic exams, mammograms

and are more likely to...

- Cancel appointments
- Delay appointments and preventive care services



Adams et al., 1993; Drury & Louis, 2002; Fontaine et al., 1998; Olson et al., 1994, Ostbye et al., 2005; Wee et al., 2000; Aldrich & Hackley, 2010.

Health plans discourage people from seeking obesity treatment:

- Routine policy exclusions for obesity “regardless of medical necessity or potential health benefit”
- Lifetime procedure caps
- High out of pocket costs
- Problematic reimbursement rates

Bias Compromises Quality of Care

- Less empathetic care
- Less preventive care
- Patients feel berated and disrespected
- Obesity blamed for every symptom

“You could walk in with an ax sticking out of your head and they would tell you your head hurt because you are fat.”

Using Shame and Blame against Obesity is a Lie

- Research shows that weight discrimination doubles the risk of developing obesity
- and triples the risk of persistent obesity
- Encouragement, not blame is needed!

Gudzune et al, Prevent Med, 2014

Summary

- Bias compromises research, care, health and policy
- Humanizing obesity is key to reducing bias
- A strong voice for people with obesity is essential
- Progress is coming from empowering people, confronting bias, access to care and innovative research.

