



## Editorial

# Changing perspectives: Let's speak about obesity

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Obesity is now one of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's most significant public health challenges, rising fastest in low- and middle-income countries. According to the global burden of disease, the burden of obesity has reached epidemic proportions, with over 4 million people dying each year as a result of being overweight or obese in 2017. Between 1975 and 2016, the global prevalence of overweight or obese children and adolescents aged 5–19 years increased more than fourfold, from 4% to 18%, according to the World Health Organization's data. Over 1.9 billion people worldwide will be living with obesity in 2035. The estimated global economic impact of obesity will reach \$4.32 trillion in 2035. Between 2020 and 2035, childhood obesity is anticipated to increase by 100%. The vast majority of overweight or obese children are found in developing countries, where the rate of increase is more than 30% higher than in developed countries.

Obesity is a key risk factor for a variety of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke and cancer. Excess weight can cause musculoskeletal disorders such as osteoarthritis. Obesity has also been linked to cancers such as endometrial, breast, ovarian, prostate, liver, gallbladder, kidney and colon. Even if a person is only slightly overweight, the risk of these NCDs increases and becomes more serious as the body mass index rises.

Obesity is basically caused by an imbalance of calories consumed and calories expended. Consumption of energy-dense foods high in fat and free sugars has increased as global diets have changed in recent decades. Physical activity has also decreased as a result of the changing nature of many types of work, increased access to transportation and increased urbanisation.

World Obesity Day was launched in 2015 as an annual campaign to encourage and support practical activities that will assist people in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, as well as reversing the worldwide obesity issue. It aims to raise awareness, stimulate activism, reform policies and share knowledge about obesity. In 2016, the campaign touched over 6 million individuals and the campaign reached over 6 billion individuals in 2021.

World Obesity Day is being observed on 4 March 2023 has the theme: '*Changing Perspectives: Let's Speak About Obesity*'. Obesity rates have nearly quadrupled since 1975, nearly tripling in children and adolescents, and are impacting people of all ages and social categories in both developed and developing countries. The root causes of obesity, which are frequently a complex combination of dietary, lifestyle, genetic, psychological, sociocultural, economic and environmental factors. It is time to reconsider our strategy for addressing this complicated global public health issue. World Obesity Day helps to recognise obesity as a disease which encourages people to seek medical care

and shift the public discourse away from individual blame. These actions help prevent and manage obesity.

Tips to prevent obesity

- Choosing healthier diet enriched with fruits, vegetables, healthy fats and protein
- Limiting unhealthy foods such as potatoes, sweets, red and processed meat
- Limiting unhealthy beverages (sugary drinks and sodas)
- Avoiding sedentary lifestyle, physical activity by limiting screen time and other 'sit time'
- Reduce the number of calories consumed from fats and sugars, increase the portion of daily intake of fruit, vegetables, legumes, whole grains and nuts
- Engage in regular physical activity to reduce the risk of overweight and obesity (60 min/day for children and 150 min/week for adults)

- Exclusive breastfeeding from birth to 6 months of age has been shown in studies to reduce the risk of infants becoming overweight or obese.

World Obesity Day helps to recognise obesity as a disease which encourages people to seek medical care and shift the public discourse away from individual blame. These actions help prevent and manage obesity.

Let us join hands to fight the obesity

Dr. Bhaskar Shenoy

Editor in Chief

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