

### Figure 10.1.2.16. Obesity

Database: World Problems and Issues

**Link type:** aggravated by problems

Network nodes: 134

**UIA database:** <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&DR=E1177>



Obesity is a chronic disease. It develops over a period of years. Obesity becomes a health problem when it leads to disability, illness or increased risk of death, and these effects are difficult to separate or quantify. Some of the consequences of obesity are controversial. However, serious overweight appears to reduce life expectancy. Obesity strongly predisposes to maturity-onset (type 2) diabetes because it can lead to insulin resistance and glucose intolerance, conditions that often precede the onset of type 2 diabetes. The evidence linking it to hypertension is somewhat controversial but obesity is considered to be a major risk factor for coronary heart disease. It also causes disabilities, including osteo-arthritis of weight-bearing joints, musculo-skeletal complaints such as backache, potential loss of vision (via diabetes), varicose veins, breathing difficulties (including sleep apnoea), increased surgical, obstetric and cancer risks and numerous psycho-social problems. Overweight and obese people reportedly have slower cognitive abilities, increased pain and limited mobility. Paradoxically the energy intake of people living today may be less than that of their parents and grandparents at the same age. They are more inclined to put on weight because their lifestyles are less physically active. Technology has made it easier to get by on less work. Around the world, cars replace bikes, television replaces outdoor activity, and it has almost become unavoidable to be lazy. Other contributors are lack of education and a lack of money in poorer societies; however in richer societies self-indulgence and sedentary lifestyles are blamed. Thus money and education do not eradicate obesity. The number of overfed people on the planet is at its highest level. For the first time in history (year 2000) the world's total of overweight people equals the total of those who are underfed. Up to 1.2 billion people eat more than they need, and as many go hungry each day.