

OBESITY: THE EPIDEMY OF 21ST CENTURY

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Obesity, part of the group of non-transmittable chronic diseases, is in the process of becoming one of the greatest challenges of the new millennium, emerging as a serious population problem in recent years and causing considerable impact on every aspects of health. The significant and worldwide increase in its epidemiologic magnitude entails that obesity now occupies a significant space in the morbimortality profile.

Among various renderings, we can define obesity as a multifactor disease consisting of excessive accumulation of large volumes of adipose tissue in the body that incurs in losses and health risks to the affected individual.

Various factors act regulating food intake and energy storage, thus contributing to the development of obesity. Among these we can highlight factors of neural, endocrine, adipocyte, intestinal, and genetic origin or expression. The influence of diet can still be regarded as one of the most pervasive factors to the rising incidence of obesity, coupled with reduced energy expenditure.

Our society is frequently bombarded by sophisticated and elaborate advertising that stimulates us to have an unbalanced diet at the same time that more and more time is spent in front of televisions and computers.

We can see increasing numbers of sedentary people in all age groups! In Brazil, more specifically, urbanization must be taken into account, as well as its impact on eating patterns, since the population now eats more processed foods, along with the negative changes in the practice of physical activity.

The study and understanding obesity is of great importance, since this disease represents potential morbidity for virtually all human organs and systems. As part of group of conditions characterized by long latency period, irreversible damage, and complications that cause varying degrees of disability and even death, obesity can present its notorious morbidity in the form of cardiovascular disease, malignant neoplasia, diabetes, systemic hypertension, dyslipidemia, hyperuricemia, abnormalities in sex hormones, in lungs and gallbladder, arthritis, and gout, among others.

Therefore, obesity has become a recurring theme in current literature, due in large part to the exponential increase in the prevalence of this condition in all layers of society. As an increasingly popular theme, it has also caused other associated issues become notable in healthcare publications, particularly over the Internet. As obesity gains prominence in **websites**, social networks, and other digital media, the *Revista Médica* now becomes up to date with the constant modernization in communication media. Therefore, this publication can now be accessed via the Internet in quarterly issues, both in Portuguese and English. Readers can now access the **website** www.rmmg.org.br to see all of this journal's issues, in its 23 years of existence. Moreover, all submission, edition and revision processes can now be done **on-line**. Authors will be able to monitor in real time the evaluation, revision requests (when appropriate), and final approval of their papers, all with absolute confidentiality.

In a world increasingly populated with media, where people need fast answers from trustworthy sources, the *Revista Médica* is attuned to the best of what published in the virtual world, both in the national and international levels.

I invite you all to read these articles, which have been written by important names from various specialities and that will, without a doubt, greatly enrich the discussion of this subject that has been systematically engaging the whole world.

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