

OBESITY AS A PRESSING MEDICAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEM

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Abstract

Obesity is one of the most common chronic diseases of our time and represents a serious medical and social problem. It is associated with excessive accumulation of adipose tissue in the body and leads to the development of many comorbidities, including type 2 diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular pathologies, musculoskeletal system diseases, and a decrease in the quality of life. This article examines the main causes, mechanisms of development, classification, clinical manifestations, methods of diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of obesity.

Keywords: Obesity, excess body weight, body mass index, metabolic syndrome, prevention.

Introduction

Obesity has emerged as one of the most significant medical and social challenges of the modern world. Characterized by excessive accumulation of body fat, obesity is associated with a wide range of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disorders, type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension, musculoskeletal conditions, and certain types of cancer. According to global health statistics, the prevalence of obesity continues to rise across all age groups, affecting both developed and developing countries.

Beyond its medical consequences, obesity represents a serious social problem due to its impact on quality of life, work productivity, and healthcare systems. Social determinants such as sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy dietary habits, urbanization, and socioeconomic inequality play a critical role in the development and progression of obesity. In addition, obesity often leads to psychological distress, social stigmatization, and reduced self-esteem, further complicating its management.

Given its multifactorial nature, obesity requires a comprehensive approach that integrates medical treatment, preventive strategies, public health interventions, and social awareness. This article examines obesity as a pressing medical and social problem, highlighting its causes, health consequences, and the importance of multidisciplinary strategies for effective prevention and management.

In recent decades, obesity has become a global epidemic. According to the World Health Organization, the number of people with excess body weight and obesity is constantly increasing both among the adult population and among children and adolescents. Obesity negatively affects not only physical health but also a person's psycho-emotional state, reducing work capacity and life expectancy.

Epidemiology of obesity. The prevalence of obesity varies significantly depending on the region, the level of socio-economic development, and the lifestyle of the population. In developed countries,





obesity is more often associated with hypodynamia and excessive consumption of high-calorie foods, while in developing countries, there is an increase in obesity against the backdrop of urbanization and changes in eating habits.

Causes and risk factors. The main causes of obesity are:

- Excessive calorie intake;
- low physical activity;
- hereditary predisposition;
- hormonal disorders;
- psycho-emotional factors;
- side effects of some medications.

Pathogenesis of obesity. At the heart of obesity development lies the imbalance between energy intake with food and its expenditure. Excess energy is deposited as adipose tissue. Hormones (insulin, leptin, ghrelin) that regulate appetite and metabolism play an important role. Disruption of their regulation leads to progressive obesity and the development of insulin resistance.

Classification of obesity. The most common classification is by body mass index (BMI):

normal body weight: 18.5-24.9 kg/m²

excess body weight: 25.0-29.9 kg/m²

obesity grade I: 30.0-34.9 kg/m²

obesity II degree: 35.0-39.9 kg/m²

obesity grade III: ≥ 40 kg/m²

Abdominal and ginoïd obesity are also distinguished based on the distribution of adipose tissue.

Complications of obesity. Obesity contributes to the development of the following diseases:

type 2 diabetes mellitus;

arterial hypertension;

ischemic heart disease;

stroke;

joint diseases;

fatty liver disease;

reproductive disorders.

Diagnostics

Diagnosis of obesity includes:

determination of BMI;

measuring the waist circumference;

assessment of body composition;

Laboratory studies (blood glucose, lipid profile);

Assessment of concomitant diseases.





Treatment of obesity. Treatment should be comprehensive and include:

diet therapy;

Increased physical activity;

behavioral therapy;

Medical treatment (according to indications);

surgical treatment (in severe forms of obesity).

Prevention of obesity. Prevention is aimed at forming a healthy lifestyle and includes:

- rational nutrition;
- regular physical activity;
- body weight control;
- educational work among the population.

Conclusion

In conclusion, obesity is not only a medical condition but also a complex social issue that poses serious challenges to global public health. Its growing prevalence and strong association with chronic diseases significantly increase morbidity, mortality, and healthcare costs. At the same time, the social and psychological consequences of obesity negatively affect individuals' well-being and societal participation.

Effective prevention and management of obesity require coordinated efforts at individual, community, and policy levels. Promoting healthy lifestyles, improving nutritional awareness, encouraging physical activity, and implementing evidence-based medical interventions are essential components of obesity control. Addressing obesity as both a medical and social problem is crucial for improving population health outcomes and ensuring sustainable healthcare systems in the future. Obesity is a serious problem of modern society, requiring a comprehensive approach to its prevention and treatment. Early diagnosis and lifestyle correction significantly reduce the risk of complications and improve the quality of life of patients.

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