Prevalence of adults (15 years and older) who are obese (percentage)

Rationale for use

The prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults has been increasing globally. Obese adults (BMI =30.0) are at increased risk of adverse metabolic outcomes including increased blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides, and insulin resistance. Subsequently, an increase in BMI exponentially increases the risk of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), such as coronary heart disease, ischaemic stroke and type-2 diabetes mellitus. Raised BMI is also associated with an increased risk of cancer.

Definition

Percentage of adults classified as obese (BMI = 30.0 kg/m²) among total adult population (15 years and older).

Associated terms

Adult overweight (BMI = 25.0 kg/m²)

Pre-obese (BMI 25.00-29.99 kg/m²)

Obesity (BMI = 30.00 kg/m²)

Data sources

Nationally representative household surveys, including Demographic and Health Survey (DHS).

Methods of estimation

Estimates are still under development and will be published later in 2006. Only nationally-representative surveys with either anthropometric data collection or self-reported weight and height (mostly in high income countries) are included in the 2006 World Health Statistics.

Disaggregation

By sex, age, location (urban/rural, major regions/provinces).

References


Database

- Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). (http://www.measuredhs.com)

- WHO Global Database on Body Mass Index (BMI). (http://www.who.int/bmi)

Comments

The household surveys focus on different age ranges and sometimes on select samples (such as women of reproductive ages who have a child under five years of age), which affects comparability. Also, self-reported height and weight information are more likely to have problems than measured adult BMI. The existing data are under review and estimation methods are being developed. It is expected that a new set of data and metadata, and eventually estimates, will replace the currently available information.