Social and Psychological Consequences of Obesity

Abstract

The strong prejudice in this country against obese persons is evident in children as young as 6 years of age. There is discrimination against obese persons in both academic and work settings. Despite this discrimination, overweight persons in the general population show no greater psychological disturbance than do non-obese persons. Similarly, obese patients seen for medical or surgical procedures generally show no more psychopathology than do non-obese patients. Serious psychiatric disturbances associated with obesity include disparagement of body image and negative emotional reactions to dieting. Dieting may also be responsible for the increased incidence of bulimia observed in this country in recent years. Women, adolescent girls, and the morbidly obese appear to suffer the most deleterious consequences of society’s contempt for the obese.
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The influence of obesity on psychological and social functioning of adolescent girls and adult women with PCOS is well documented by many studies [7–11, 14, 16, 17, 29]. The obesity leads to a decrease in quality of life and self-esteem, especially from a feminine point of view. Women, especially young ones, tend to judge themselves by the way they see themselves. This might be because of the social support that obese subjects get from medical and/or psychological institutions and family members, especially if the whole family suffers from obesity. It could also be due to subjective and positive self-assessment of their own body image [30–32]. This subjective body image, distant from the real picture of the body, could neutralize negative self-assessment. The purpose of
this review was to focus on psychiatric, psychological, and psychosocial consequences of childhood obesity (OB) to include a broad range of international studies. The aim was to establish what has recently changed in relation to the common psychological consequences associated with childhood OB. The strength of association between psychological disorders, psychosocial problems, and OB may also depend upon OB stigma, teasing, and treatment. OB stigma and teasing/bullying are pervasive and can have serious consequences for.