

# **Solutions for the Clinical Setting: Educating Future Clinicians about Weight Bias and Stigma**

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# Objectives

**1**

**Discuss obesity stigma and its effects on medical learners**

**2**

**Explain strategies to reduce weight bias, stigma and shame amongst learners**



**WARNING**

**IT'S HARD TO BE A LITTLE GIRL  
IF YOU'RE NOT.**

Stop childhood obesity. **strong4life.com**

Brought to you by Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

# "Stop Sugarcoating It, Georgia" Campaign



 <p><b>WARNING</b></p> <p><b>CHUBBY KIDS MAY NOT OUTLIVE THEIR PARENTS</b></p> <p><small>stopchildhoodobesity.com</small></p>	 <p><b>WARNING</b></p> <p><b>FAT KIDS BECOME FAT ADULTS.</b></p> <p><small>stopchildhoodobesity.com</small></p>	 <p><b>WARNING</b></p> <p><b>BIG BONES DIDN'T MAKE ME THIS WAY. BIG MEALS DID.</b></p> <p><small>stopchildhoodobesity.com</small></p>	 <p><b>WARNING</b></p> <p><b>HE HAS HIS FATHER'S EYES, HIS LAUGH AND MAYBE EVEN HIS DIABETES.</b></p> <p><small>stopchildhoodobesity.com</small></p>
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*"It has to be harsh. If it's not, nobody's going to listen," says ..., vice president of **Children's Healthcare of Atlanta**, the pediatric hospital running the campaign. -NPR(1/9/12)*

**Dehumanizing**

**Belittling**

**Humiliating**

**Stigmatizing**

**Strategic/Intentional**

# Physician Labels for Patients with Obesity

*Noncompliant*

*Unattractive*

*Awkward*

*Lazy*

*Sloppy*

*Dishonest*

*Lack self-control*

*Ugly*

*Hostile*

*Decreased medication adherence*

*Poor hygiene*

*Weak-willed*

*Reduced health*

*Low Self-esteem*

*Reduced sexual attractiveness*

*Less intelligent*



# Clinical Public Health Summit on Obesity

## How Physicians Can Engage Obesity with Tools of Health Equity and Empathy in Washington, D.C.

Clinical Public Health Summit  
on Obesity

*GW Medical Class of 2025*

School of Medicine  
& Health Sciences

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

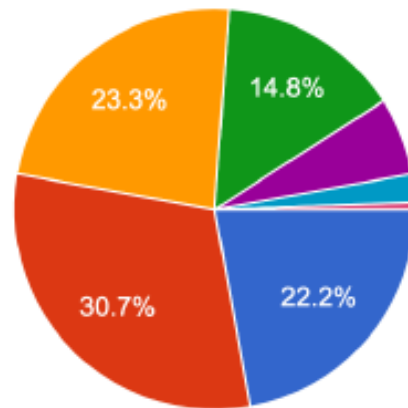


8<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit

- **175+ preclinical medical students** and explored their reflections when confronted with their own unconscious bias
- **Completed Harvard Implicit Association Test-weight**
- **~500 word reflection & Completed Qualitative Analysis** *(Adapted from Dr. Thomas Sherman-Georgetown)*

What are your results from the IAT you completed?

176 responses



- "Strong automatic preference for Thin people over Fat people"
- "Moderate automatic preference for Thin people over Fat people"
- "Slight automatic preference for Thin people over Fat people"
- "No automatic preference between Fa..."
- "Slight automatic preference for Fat p..."
- "Moderate automatic preference for F..."
- "Strong automatic preference for Fat p..."

- **76.2% Automatic preference for "Thin" people over "Fat" people**
- **14.8% No automatic preference for either**
- **9% Automatic preference for "Fat" people over "Thin" people**



# Medical Students' Attitudes towards Overweight and Obesity

Birte Pantenburg<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Claudia Sikorski<sup>1,2</sup>, Melanie Lupp<sup>2</sup>, Georg Schomerus<sup>3</sup>, Hans-Helmut König<sup>4</sup>, Perla Werner<sup>5</sup>, Steffi G. Riedel-Heller<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Integrated Research and Treatment Center (IFB) AdiposityDiseases, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany, <sup>2</sup> Institute of Social Medicine, Occupational Health and Public Health, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany, <sup>3</sup> Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, University of Greifswald, Stralsund, Germany, <sup>4</sup> Department of Medical Sociology and Health Economics, University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany, <sup>5</sup> Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel

Obesity stigma reduction in medical students

H. Jean C. Wiese,<sup>1</sup> John F. Wilson,<sup>1</sup> Russell A. Jones<sup>2</sup> and Michael Neises<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Kentucky College of Medicine, Department of Behavioral Science, College of Medicine Office Building, Lexington, KY 40536–0086, <sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, University of North Florida, 4567 St. John's Bluff Road South, Jacksonville, FL 32216 and <sup>3</sup> Burke Marketing Research, 2 Centennial Plaza, Cincinnati, OH 45239, USA

## National Sample of 4732 Medical Students

67% Explicit Bias

74% Implicit Bias

Phelan, et. al, Obesity, 2014

The Adverse Effect  
Students with Over

Sean M. Phelan, Ph.D., MPH  
Lisette N. Dyrbye, M.D.<sup>1</sup>, J  
David Nelson, Ph.D.<sup>2</sup>, Sylvia  
Rachel R. Hardeman, Ph.D.

Author Manuscript

Acad Med. Author manuscript;

Published in final edited form as:  
Acad Med. 2013 July ; 88(7): 978–

Are Medical Students Aware of Their Anti-Obesity Bias?

AMA Journal of Ethics®

October 2018, Volume 20, Number 10: E948-959

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Addressing Medical Students' Negative Bias Toward Patients With Obesity Through Ethics Education

Gail Geller, ScD, MHS and Paul A. Watkins, MD, PhD

S Persky<sup>1</sup> and CP Eccleston<sup>2</sup>



HHS Public Access

Author manuscript

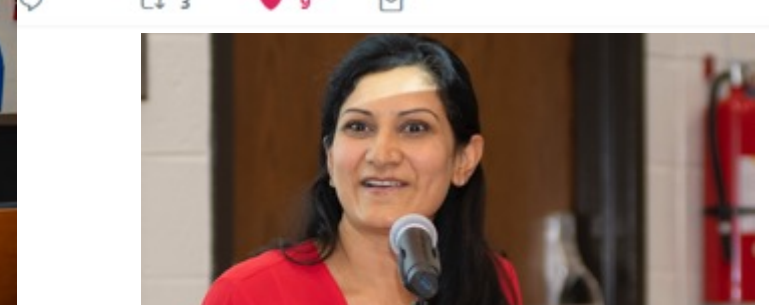
Obesity (Silver Spring). Author manuscript; available in PMC 2014 October 01.

Published in final edited form as:

Obesity (Silver Spring). 2014 April ; 22(4): 1201–1208. doi:10.1002/oby.20687.

Implicit and Explicit Weight Bias in a National Sample of 4732 Medical Students: The Medical Student CHANGES Study







1. Increase **personal & collegial awareness** (i.e. IAT-weight)

2. Train Staff & Colleagues

3. Incorporate **personal narratives & experiential learning** opportunities into training

4. Recognize the **complexity** of the disease of obesity

5. Respect **autonomy** of patient



1. Increase **personal & collegial awareness** (i.e. IAT-weight)

2. Train Staff & Colleagues

3. Incorporate **narratives** learning on training

4. Recognize the **complexity** of the disease of obesity

7. Establish an **equitable** establishment

8. Commit to **person first language**

***The person with obesity has....***

***Vs.***

***The obese person has.....***

5. Respect **autonomy** of patient

1. Increase **personal & collegial awareness** (i.e. IAT-weight)

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**training**

4. Recognize the **complexity**  
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7. Establish an **equitable**

8. Commit to **person first**  
**language**

**e non-stigmatizing**  
**images**

5. Respect **autonomy** of  
patient

***Obesity Action Coalition***

<https://www.obesityaction.org/get-educated/public-resources/oac-image-gallery/>

***Obesity Canada***

<https://obesitycanada.ca/resources/image-bank/>

***Rudd Center***

<https://uconnruddcenter.org/media-gallery>

***World Obesity Federation***

<https://www.worldobesity.org/resources/image-bank>

***European Association for the Study of Obesity Obesity Federation***

<https://easo.org/media-portal/obesity-image-bank/>



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2. **Train Staff & Colleagues**

3. Incorporate **personal narratives & experiential learning** opportunities into training

4. Recognize the **complexity** of the disease of obesity

7. Establish an **equitable** establishment

6. Hyperfocus on **Health > Weight**

5. Respect **autonomy** of patient

8. Commit to **person first language**

9. Use **non-stigmatizing images**

10. Take the **pledge**

### Box 1 | Pledge to eliminate weight bias and stigma of obesity

#### We recognize that

- Individuals affected by overweight and obesity face a pervasive form of social stigma based on the typically unproven assumption that their body weight derives primarily from a lack self-discipline and personal responsibility.
- Such portrayal is inconsistent with current scientific evidence demonstrating that body-weight regulation is not entirely under volitional control, and that biological, genetic, and environmental factors critically contribute to obesity.
- Weight bias and stigma can result in discrimination, and undermine human rights, social rights, and the health of afflicted individuals.
- Weight stigma and discrimination cannot be tolerated in modern societies.

#### We condemn

- The use of stigmatizing language, images, attitudes, policies, and weight-based discrimination, wherever they occur.


#### We pledge

- To treat individuals with overweight and obesity with dignity and respect.
- To refrain from using stereotypical language, images, and narratives that unfairly and inaccurately depict individuals with overweight and obesity as lazy, gluttonous, and lacking willpower or self-discipline.
- To encourage and support educational initiatives aimed at eradicating weight bias through dissemination of current knowledge of obesity and body-weight regulation.
- To encourage and support initiatives aimed at preventing weight discrimination in the workplace, education, and healthcare settings.

#### We pledge

- To treat individuals with overweight and obesity with **dignity and respect**.
- To **refrain from using stereotypical language, images, and narratives** that unfairly and inaccurately depict individuals with overweight and obesity as lazy, gluttonous, and lacking willpower or self-discipline.
- To **encourage and support educational initiatives** aimed at eradicating weight bias through dissemination of current knowledge of obesity and body-weight regulation.
- To encourage and **support initiatives aimed at preventing weight discrimination in the workplace**, education, and healthcare settings.

Joint international consensus statement for  
ending stigma of obesity



Q & A

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# Clinical Public Health Summit Highlighted on NPR

- <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/01/31/1152491692/scant-obesity-training-in-medical-school-leaves-docs-ill-prepared-to-help-patien>





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