

Human virus makes fat stem cells fatter

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U.S. research showing how a human virus targets fat stem cells to produce more, fatter, fat cells is providing insights into the study of obesity.

Magdalena Pasarica of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, La., has been studying the human adenoviruses-36 and their role in human obesity. Adenoviruses are the same viruses that cause colds.

Earlier researchers using mice showed Ad-36 might contribute to obesity by super-charging fat cells to grow and store more fat. Pasarica's research with humans shows the virus goes to work before the formation of human pre-fat cells by targeting the stem cells that would eventually convert to pre-fat cells.

The virus causes more stem cells to convert to pre-fat cells and causes the pre-fat cells to become bigger fat cells.

Pasarica presented her findings Wednesday in Baton Rouge during a meeting of the International Fat Applied Technology Society.

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