

Researchers associate calories from newspaper dessert recipes with community obesity rates

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Research finds calorie-dense dessert recipes printed in major newspapers across the country may be contributing to obesity in large cities. The study, conducted by researchers at Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation, Marshfield, Wis., is published in the latest issue of the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* (Volume 106, No. 2).

The regions studied were in the West (Los Angeles, Denver, Portland), Midwest (Milwaukee, Detroit, Kansas City), South (Washington D.C., Dallas, Jacksonville) and the Northeast (New York, Philadelphia, Boston).

"The average total caloric content of dessert recipes was significantly associated with the percent obese in the metropolitan cities," reports the study, regarding recipes that were published the last week of August 2000. The researchers studied 64 entrée and 38 dessert recipes published in major newspapers serving cities with populations of 400,000 or more. The study found no association between the entrée recipes and obesity.

"While these data cannot be interpreted as causal, they are intriguing and suggest that newspapers may play a greater role in promoting or preventing obesity than previously recognized," said Catherine McCarty, Ph.D, MPH, Lead Scientist and Interim Director, Center for Human Genetics, Marshfield Clinic.

The report notes that the news media play an important role in providing nutrition information, but with respect to recipes, "this information is seldom studied." The authors add that the study results underscore "the importance of publishing recipes to help readers achieve and maintain a healthy weight."

Source: Marshfield Clinic

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