

# Obesity and depression may be linked

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A major review in *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* reveals that research indicates people who are obese may be more likely to become depressed, and people who are depressed may be more likely to become obese.

To understand the potential links between obesity and depression, researchers led by Sarah M. Markowitz, M.S., examined the correlational data that suggest a connection between the conditions and found evidence for causal pathways from obesity to depression and depression to obesity.

People who are obese may be more likely to become depressed because they experience themselves as in poor health and are dissatisfied with their appearance. This occurrence was particularly prevalent among women and those of high socio-economic status.

People who are depressed may be more likely to become obese because of physiological changes in their hormone and immune systems that occur in depression. Also, they have more difficulty taking good care of themselves because of symptoms and consequences of depression, such as difficulty adhering to fitness regimens, overeating, and having negative thoughts.

Treatments such as exercise and stress reduction can help to manage both obesity and depression at the same time. Potentially, dieting, which can worsen mood, and antidepressants, which can cause weight gain, should be minimized.

"The treatment of depression and obesity should be integrated," the authors conclude. "This way, healthcare providers are working together to treat both conditions, rather than each in isolation."

Source: Wiley

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