

Food availability sees men put on a stone in weight

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The average male in 2000 was more than a stone heavier than in 1986.

(PhysOrg.com) -- Greater food availability and less exercise made the average man in the year 2000 over a stone heavier than he was in 1986, Oxford University research has shown.

Scientists from Oxford University's BHF Health Promotion Research Group analysed data on body [weight](#) along with changes in the amount of food people consumed over the 15-year time period.

Dr Peter Scarborough of the Department of Public Health at Oxford University, who led the research, said: 'We looked at how much food was available over time, accounting for food that's wasted or thrown away. It's clear people are eating more, and today we're seeing a

continued increase in the amount of food available.’

The British Heart Foundation-funded research is published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*.

The researchers found that the average man in 2000 ate more food than the average 1986 man – in theory enough to make him 4.7kg heavier.

But the actual observed increase in average male weight of 7.7kg was much more than expected from the extra food available to men in 2000.

The researchers conclude that a reduction in physical activity is behind the increased weight, as well as the extra [food](#).

‘There could be a number of reasons for the reduction in exercise,’ says Dr Scarborough. ‘One partial explanation could be that men spend more of their working lives sitting at desks now – manual careers are less common than they used to be.’

Bigger men are known to be at higher risk of heart disease. 25 per cent of men in England were classed as obese in 2008, the most recent data available, compared with only around 7 per cent in 1986/7.

Dr Mike Knapton, Associate Medical Director at the British Heart Foundation, said: ‘This research suggests a ticking time bomb for male health, and underlines the importance of both regular exercise and a balanced diet in keeping your weight down and your heart healthy. The number of obese [men](#) is not going down.

‘Obesity is a major risk factor for diabetes, heart disease and stroke and contributes to premature death and poor quality of life.’

Provided by Oxford University

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