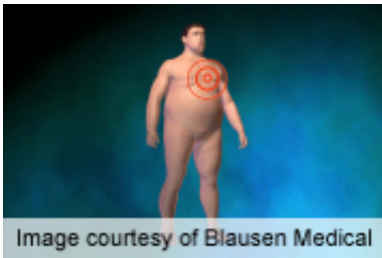


Emphasizing environmental causes of obesity is motivating

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(HealthDay)—Messages that acknowledge personal responsibility, while emphasizing environmental causes of obesity, seem to motivate individuals to engage in healthy diet and exercise behavior, according to a study published Dec. 12 in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Preventing Chronic Disease*.

Jeff Niederdeppe, Ph.D., from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues used data from 485 adults recruited from a shopping mall in New York and 718 adult members of a web-based national panel of U.S. adults to examine the impact of messages emphasizing environmental determinants of obesity on motivation to engage in healthy lifestyle behaviors. Respondents read a story that emphasized environmental determinants of health or a control condition and varied regarding how much personal responsibility the character took for weight management. After reading the story, participants were surveyed regarding their intent

to eat more fruits and vegetables, exercise regularly, and control their diet to lose weight.

In both studies, the researchers found that the high personal responsibility condition produced greater intentions to engage in healthy behavior. In study one, the probability of overweight/obese respondents engaging in all three behaviors was 52 and 51 percent for those who read the high and moderate personal responsibility vignettes, respectively, compared with 32 percent of overweight/obese respondents in the control group. In the second study, the effects were driven by normal-weight respondents, with the higher [personal responsibility](#) condition producing greater intentions to [diet](#) among normal-weight but not overweight/obese respondents.

"Emphasizing factors outside of personal control appears to enhance rather than undermine motivations to engage in [healthy diet](#) and [exercise behavior](#)," the authors write.

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