

Obesity crisis has scaled even the Himalayas

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Rates in remote mountain villages are five times higher than two decades ago.

(HealthDay)—Obesity rates in remote Himalayan mountain villages are five times higher than they were two decades ago, according to a new study that highlights the extent of the global obesity epidemic.

Obesity-related health issues have skyrocketed as well, the study found.

Researchers looked at data from more than 4,600 adults in the Gilgit Baltistan region of Pakistan who took part in surveys conducted in 1995 and 2013. Over those 18 years, the obesity rate rose from about 2 percent to almost 13 percent, and the proportion of overweight people increased from almost 12 percent to about 27 percent.

"Overweight and obesity is a rapidly growing public health burden in the rural population of Pakistan. Overall obesity and central obesity were

significant correlates for type 2 diabetes and pre-diabetes in the high mountain study population," said Syed Shah, an associate professor at the Institute of Public Health of United Arab Emirates University, and colleagues.

The study was scheduled for presentation Tuesday at the European Congress on Obesity in Bulgaria. Findings presented at meetings are usually considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

Of the nearly 1,100 people who took part in the 2013 survey, more than 6 percent had [type 2 diabetes](#) and almost 8 percent had pre-diabetes. Those with a waist circumference of 35 inches or more were four times more likely to have diabetes than those with smaller waists. Obese people were 16 times more likely to have pre-diabetes than normal weight people.

However, the investigators also found that 9 percent of people were underweight, which shows that the region faces "a dual war" against both malnutrition and obesity, the researchers said in a European Congress news release.

More information: The U.S. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases outlines the [health risks of being overweight](#).

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