

Weight loss study finds rich more likely to join clubs, while poor more likely to take pills

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Where you live and deprivation levels can affect your efforts to lose weight according to a new study from the University of Sheffield, which found that people from wealthy areas are more likely to have used slimming clubs than people from more deprived areas.

The unique study also found that those from more deprived areas are more likely to have used [weight](#)-loss medications than their richer neighbours.

More than half of the 26,000 people who took part in the study were overweight, with 19.6 per cent found to be obese. Obesity was most

common among older people affecting 22.8 per cent of those between the ages of 56 to 75 and 16.9 per cent of people aged 76 or over. People living in more deprived areas were more than twice as likely to be obese than those living in richer areas.

When asked which methods they had used to manage their weight, the most common strategies included healthy eating (49 per cent), increasing exercise (43.4 per cent) and reducing portion size (43 per cent). Those living in the most deprived areas were least likely to report managing their weight through these methods but were the most likely to report using weight loss medication and/or meal replacements. While only 1.9 per cent of people in wealthy areas had tried weight loss medication, more than twice as many people from deprived areas had taken pills (alli, orlistat, herbal remedies, appetite suppressants) to control their weight. People in the most deprived areas were also the least likely to have attended a slimming club.

The study also found that women were much more likely to be concerned about their weight than men, despite the fact that more men were overweight than women. 44 per cent of men were found to be overweight, compared to 31 per cent of women. However, 45 per cent of women reported feeling concerned about their weight compared to just 31 per cent of men.

Dr Clare Relton who led the study at the University of Sheffield said: "This study shows that both obesity and the approaches people use to manage their weight vary according to whether you live in a deprived area or a wealthy area."

Professor Paul Bissell, who was involved in the study added: "We've known for some time about the social gradient in [obesity](#), but this study also provides evidence that services are differentially taken up by patients according to levels of deprivation."

Provided by University of Sheffield

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