

Advocating weight diversity

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A new review of the way health care professionals emphasise weight to define health and wellbeing suggests the approach could be harmful to patients.

Author of the review article, Dr Rachel Calogero of the School of Psychology at the University of Kent, together with experts from other institutions and organisations, recommends that this approach, known as 'weight-normative', is replaced by [health care professionals](#), public health officials and policy-makers with a 'weight-inclusive' approach.

Weight-inclusive approaches, such as the Health At Every Size initiative, emphasise a view of health and wellbeing as multifaceted and direct efforts toward improving health access and reducing weight stigma.

Based on their study, the authors say that [health providers](#), [public health officials](#), and policy makers should eradicate weight stigma, fat shaming, and blanket prescriptions for weight loss and move to facilitating health and wellbeing for all, regardless of body shape.

The review, published in the current issue of the *Journal of Obesity*, points to the failure of weight loss interventions for sustaining lower weights and improving health. It highlights the dangers of yo-yo dieting on physical and [mental health](#), the link between dieting and eating disorders, and widespread weight stigma as evidence of the physical, mental, emotional, and ethical costs of a 'weight-normative' approach.

The authors say that a weight-inclusive approach would relinquish the

focus on weight and instead emphasize social determinants of health, such as racism and poverty. The weight-inclusive approach accepts and supports human diversity – including size diversity. A review of the evidence suggests that a weight-inclusive approach stops the stigmatising of [health problems](#) as weight problems—and offers a more accurate, research-based understanding of positive health and wellbeing for all people.

More information: The review article, *The Weight-Inclusive versus Weight-Normative Approach to Health: Evaluating the Evidence for Prioritizing Well-Being over Weight Loss*, is published in the current edition of the *Journal of Obesity*.

Provided by University of Kent

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