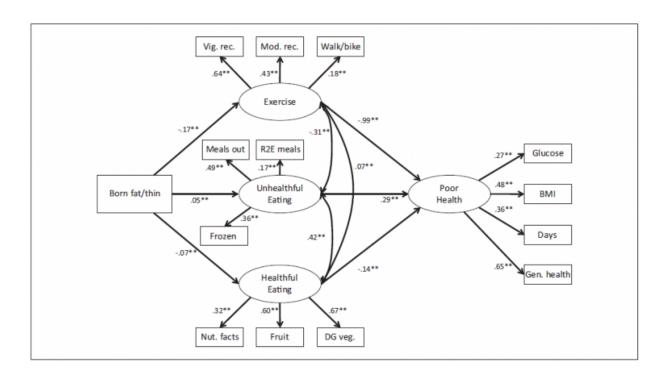


Thinking people are born fat or born thin is bad for your health

September 8 2015



Vig. rec. = vigorous recreational activity; Mod. rec. = moderate recreational activity; Walk/bike = walking or biking for at least 10 minutes each day; Meals out = meals eaten away from home; R2E meals = ready-to-eat meals; Frozen = frozen meals/pizza; Nut. Facts. = use of nutritional panels on food;Fruit = availability of fruit at home; DG veg. = availability of dark green vegetables at home; Days = subjective health (days health was not good) and Gen.health = subjective health (general rating of health). Credit: Mike C. Parent, PhD and Jessica L. Alquist, PhD



Though the belief that DNA determines weight is highly debated, it appears to be shaping people's lives. A new study finds that those who believe that weight is outside of their control have less healthy BMIs, make poorer food choices, and report lower levels of personal wellbeing than those who don't. This study was published today in *Health Education and Behavior*, a Society for Public Health Education journal.

"If an individual believes weight to be outside of the influence of diet and exercise, she or he may engage in more behaviors that are rewarding in the short term, such as eating unhealthful foods and avoiding exercise, rather than healthful behaviors with more long-term benefits for weight management," wrote study authors Dr. Mike C. Parent and Dr. Jessica L. Alquist. "By fighting the perception that weight is unchangeable, health care providers may be able to increase healthful behaviors among their patients."

Analyzing data from both medical and self-reported health measurements of 4,166 men and 4,655 women, the study authors found the following:

- As people get older, the belief that weight is unchangeable and determined by DNA is associated with less healthy eating behavior. For example, as people age, they are less likely to examine food nutrition labels and to make fruits and vegetables available at home.
- As people get older, the belief that weight is unchangeable is associated with less exercise.
- As people get older, the belief that weight is unchangeable is associated with eating more frozen meals (e.g., pizza), restaurant meals and 'ready-to-eat foods' (e.g., deli foods).

"Although previous research has found gender differences in weight as a motivation for exercise and healthful eating, we did not find evidence



that gender affected the relationship between health beliefs and physical activity or healthful eating," wrote the study authors. "However, we found evidence that the relationship between <u>belief</u> in <u>weight</u> changeability and exercise, healthful eating, and unhealthful eating differs by age."

More information: "Born Fat: The Relations Between Weight Changeability Beliefs and Health Behaviors and Physical Health," *Health Education and Behavior*, 2015.

Provided by SAGE Publications

Citation: Thinking people are born fat or born thin is bad for your health (2015, September 8) retrieved 18 April 2024 from

https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-09-people-born-fat-thin-bad.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.