

Link found between obesity and blood clots in pediatric patients

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Researchers at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center have found an association between obesity and the formation of blood clots in the veins of children and adolescents.

While obesity is a well-established risk factor for venous thromboembolism (VTE) in adults, previous studies in pediatric populations have yielded mixed results. The Wake Forest Baptist investigation, however, found that obesity as determined by [body mass index](#) was a statistically significant predictor of [blood clot formation](#) in juveniles.

The research is published in the current issue of the journal *Hospital Pediatrics*.

"This is important because the incidence of pediatric VTE has increased dramatically over the last 20 years and [childhood obesity](#) remains highly prevalent in the United States," said the study's lead author, Elizabeth Halvorson, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics at Wake Forest Baptist.

For the study the researchers conducted a retrospective chart review of inpatients at Wake Forest Baptist's Brenner Children's Hospital between January 2000 and September 2012. They identified 88 patients ages 2 to 18 who had confirmed cases of VTE. Of these, 33 (37.5 percent) were obese, though most of them had known risk factors for [blood clots](#) in addition to obesity.

After adjusting for the other risk factors - among them bloodstream infection and time spent in an intensive care unit - the researchers found a small but statistically significant association between obesity and VTE, which can cause both acute and chronic health problems if left untreated.

"Our study presents data from a single institution with a relatively small sample size," Halvorson said. "But it does demonstrate an association between [obesity](#) and VTE in children, which should be explored further in larger future studies."

Provided by Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center

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