

Obesity ups mortality risk in critically ill children

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(HealthDay)—Being overweight or obese is linked to increased mortality

in pediatric intensive care units (PICUs), according to research published online Feb. 16 in *Pediatrics*.

Patrick A. Ross, M.D., of Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and colleagues conducted a [retrospective analysis](#) of data from the Virtual PICU Systems database to assess the association between obesity and PICU [mortality](#).

The researchers found that among 127,607 patients the mortality rate was 2.48 percent. After controlling for severity of illness and preexisting comorbidities, being overweight was independently associated with increased PICU mortality. When classified according to weight-for-age or weight-for-height/body mass index, mortality had a U-shaped distribution. When patients were classified according to weight-for-age without considering height, the nadir of the mortality curve was shifted, erroneously indicating a protective benefit to mild obesity.

"Risk-adjusted PICU mortality significantly increases as weight-for-height/body mass index increases into the overweight and obese ranges," the authors write. "We believe that height data are necessary to correctly classify body habitus; without such information, a protective benefit from mild obesity may be incorrectly concluded."

More information: [Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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