

Does obesity lead to more nursing home admission and a lower quality of care?

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In a study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, researchers examined the care that obese older adults receive when they are admitted to nursing homes.

This study was designed to find out whether obese older adults were as likely as non-obese elders to be admitted to nursing homes that provided an appropriate level of care. Those who are obese (people who have a [body mass index](#) score of 30 or higher) may require nursing homes with specialized equipment, beds, and lifting devices, for example. Nursing homes also may need to have bedrooms and other spaces designed to accommodate heavier residents. What's more, since older obese adults may require extra help in performing daily activities, nursing home staffers may need to devote extra time to their care.

The researchers examined 164,256 records of [obese people](#) aged 65 or older who were admitted to nursing homes over a two-year period. They also examined the nursing homes' total number of deficiency citations and quality-of-care deficiencies to determine the quality of care that the homes provided.

The researchers reported that about 22 percent of [older adults](#) admitted to nursing homes were obese. Nearly 4 percent were considered morbidly obese. Nursing homes that admitted a higher number of obese residents were more likely to have a higher number of deficiencies.

The researchers discovered that nursing homes that admitted more

morbidly obese residents were also more likely to have more severe deficiencies in care. The researchers said that their study raises concerns about creating equal opportunities for obese elders to gain access to [nursing homes](#) that provide the highest quality of care.

More information: Ning Zhang et al, Are Obese Residents More Likely to Be Admitted to Nursing Homes That Have More Deficiencies in Care?, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2016). DOI: [10.1111/jgs.14105](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.14105)

Provided by American Geriatrics Society

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