

Fewer overweight adults report trying to lose weight

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Although weight gain has continued among U.S. adults, fewer report trying to lose weight, according to a study appearing in the March 7 issue of *JAMA*.

Socially acceptable body [weight](#) is increasing. If more individuals who are overweight or obese are satisfied with their weight, fewer might be motivated to lose unhealthy weight. Jian Zhang, M.D., Dr.P.H., of Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, and colleagues used data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) to assess the trend in the percentage of adults who were overweight or obese and trying to lose weight during three periods: from 1988-1994, 1999-2004, and 2009-2014. Participants ages 20 to 59 years who were overweight (a [body mass index](#) [BMI] of 25 to less than 30) or obese (BMI 30 or greater) were included. The question of interest was "During the past 12 months, have you tried to lose weight?"

The study included 27,350 adults. Overweight and obesity prevalence increased throughout the study period, from 53 percent in 1988-1994 to 66 percent in 2009-2014. The percentages of adults who were overweight or obese and trying to lose weight declined during the same period, from 56 percent in 1988-1994 to 49 percent in 2009-2014.

The largest decline occurred among [black women](#), from 66 percent in 1988-1994 to 55 percent in 2009-2014. Black women also had the highest prevalence of obesity, and more than half of black women (55 percent) were obese in the 2009-2014 survey. Adjusted prevalence rates

showed a significantly declining trend of reporting efforts to lose weight among white men and women, and black women.

The authors write that fewer adults trying to lose weight may be due to body weight misperception reducing the motivation to engage in [weight loss efforts](#), or primary care clinicians not discussing weight issues with patients. Also, the longer adults live with obesity, the less they may be willing to attempt weight loss, in particular if they had attempted [weight loss](#) multiple times without success.

More information: *JAMA*. [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2016.20036](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2016.20036)

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