

# Fit gamers challenge 'fat' stereotype, new esports research

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Credit: Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

Esports players are up to 21 percent healthier weight than the general population, hardly smoke and drink less too, says a new QUT study.

The findings, published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, were based on 1400 survey participants from 65 countries.

QUT esports researcher Michael Trotter said the results were surprising considering global obesity levels.

"The findings challenge the stereotype of the morbidly obese gamer," he said.

Mr Trotter said the animated satire South Park poked fun at the unfit gamer but the link between video gaming and obesity had not been strongly established.

"When you think of esports, there are often concerns raised regarding sedentary behavior and [poor health](#) as a result, and the study revealed some interesting and mixed results," he said.

"As part of their training regime, elite esports athletes spend more than an hour per day engaging in [physical exercise](#) as a strategy to enhance gameplay and manage stress," he said.

The World Health Organisation guidelines for time that should be spent being physically active weekly is a minimum of 150 minutes.

"Only top-level players surveyed met [physical activity guidelines](#), with the best players exercising on average four days a week," the Ph.D. student said.

However, the study found 4.03 percent of esports players were more likely to be morbidly obese compared to the global population.

Mr Trotter said strategies should be developed to support players classed at the higher end of BMI categories.

"Exercise and [physical activity](#) play a role in success in esports and should be a focus for players and organizations training esports players,"

Mr Trotter said.

"This will mean that in the future, young gamers will have more reason and motivation to be physically active.

"Grassroots esports pathways, such as growing university and high school esports are likely to be the best place for young esports players to develop good health habits for gamers."

The research also found esports players are 7.8 percent more likely to abstain from drinking daily, and of those players that do drink, only 0.5 percent reported drinking daily.

The survey showed only 3.7 percent of esports players smoked daily, with player smoking frequency lower compared to global data at 18.7 percent.

Future research will investigate how high-school and university esports programs can improve [health](#) outcomes and increase physical activity for gaming students.

**More information:** Michael G Trotter et al. The Association between Esports Participation, Health and Physical Activity Behavior, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (2020). [DOI: 10.3390/ijerph17197329](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17197329)

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