

# Weight dissatisfaction associated with discomfort toward school-based weight measurements

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Student weight dissatisfaction, higher perceived weight status, and being female were associated with discomfort with school-based weight

measurements according to a new study in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

To examine how body mass index (BMI) assessments are conducted in schools and whether student comfort with these assessments varied by students' perceived [weight status](#) and weight satisfaction, and who conducted the weigh-in, researchers interviewed a diverse group of fourth to eighth grade students in California schools about their experience being weighed in the prior school year.

"In about half of schools across the United States, [school staff](#) measures students' height and weight to assess their BMI, but there is limited research on the impact of these assessments on student comfort or even how these measurements take place," said corresponding author Emily Altman, MPH, School of Public Health, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, U.S.

The study demonstrated significant associations between student discomfort and being weighed by [physical education](#) (PE) teachers compared with school nurses. Only 30% of students reported having privacy during the measurements. And, in terms of comfort with the measurements, students who reported being unhappy with their weight and those who perceived themselves as overweight, were less comfortable with the assessments than their peers. Female students experienced greater discomfort being weighed than [male students](#).

"Our findings were that students who were unhappy with their weight or students that consider themselves overweight were more bothered by the measurements than their peers, and that was independent of BMI. So, these results point to an association between how students feel about themselves and their discomfort with the process independent of the number on the scale. In the end, what we really want is for students to feel good about themselves. And as such, we want to avoid doing

anything that could increase stigma," Altman said.

**More information:** Emily Altman et al, Weight Measurements in School: Setting and Student Comfort, *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jneb.2021.11.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2021.11.007)

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