

Mental health tied to weight gain in obese people during pandemic

July 27 2022



Weight gain in adults with obesity during the COVID-19 pandemic is

associated with higher baseline body mass index deteriorations in mental health, maladaptive eating behaviors, and less physical activity and sleep, according to a study published online June 30 in *Obesity*.

Jaime P. Almandoz, M.D., from University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, and colleagues examined the relationships between body weight changes, health behaviors, and [mental health](#) in 404 adults (82.6 percent female; mean age, 52.5 years) seen at three obesity practices (March 1 to Nov. 30, 2021).

The researchers found that mean weight change was +4.3 percent during the study period, with 30 percent of participants reporting weight gain ≥ 5 percent and 19 percent reporting ≥ 5 percent body weight loss. There was a [positive association](#) observed between degree of both [weight gain](#) and weight loss with baseline body mass index. The majority of participants (80 percent) reported difficulties with body weight regulation. Those who gained ≥ 5 percent body weight were more likely to report higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression; less sleep and exercise; less [healthy eating](#) and home-cooked meals; and more takeout foods, comfort foods, fast foods, overeating, and binge eating compared with those who lost ≥ 5 percent body weight.

"Our findings underscore the complexity of obesity; it's not just about telling people to eat less and move more," Almandoz said in a statement. "There's this mental health aspect that has to be integrated into treatment as well."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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Citation: Mental health tied to weight gain in obese people during pandemic (2022, July 27)

retrieved 23 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-07-mental-health-tied-weight-gain.html>

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