

# Those with overweight or obesity more likely to be absent from work due to ill health than those with normal weight

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Individuals living with overweight or obesity are more likely to be absent from work due to ill health than those with normal weight. They are also more likely to absent for longer, new research being presented at the [European Congress on Obesity](#) (ECO) in Venice, Italy (12-15 May) has found.

They have up to 147% (2.47 times) higher odds of being off due to ill health and up to 121% (2.21 times) higher odds of being absent for more than seven days in the most recent 12 months, the Europe-wide study showed.

Understanding how [economic costs](#) and labor market outcomes are associated with living with overweight or [obesity](#) is important in light of the prevalence of overweight (approx. 53 %) and obesity (16%) in Europe.

However, most studies on the subject have used national survey data and so do not allow for direct comparisons between countries and there are some countries for which data hasn't been available.

Siegfried Eisenberg MSc, study leader Dr. Thomas Czypionka and colleagues at the Health Economics and Health Policy Research Group, Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna, Austria used data from the third wave of the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS 3), which compares the health and use of health services across the EU, to assess the impact of body mass index (BMI) on labor market outcomes in 26 European countries. Most of the data was collected in 2019.

Answers to survey questions were used to estimate the impact of overweight (BMI  $\geq 25$  to

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