

Conservative voters more likely to be living with obesity, new research finds

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Governments and public health agencies may need to focus on political affiliation when developing strategies to tackle obesity, according to new research by Loughborough University.

The [study](#), published in the *International Journal of Obesity*, analyzed data from more than 2,500 people who were asked to provide information on their socio-demographic characteristics, [health outcomes](#), height/weight and the political party voted for at the 2019 UK General Election.

The researchers found that Conservative voters were more likely to be living with obesity (between 42%–54% higher odds) than those who voted Labor or the Liberal Democrats. Conservative voters also had on average significantly higher BMI scores (~1 unit) than those voting Labor and the Liberal Democrats.

There was no evidence participants living in constituencies won by Conservative MPs were more likely to be living with obesity than those in constituencies won by other party MPs.

Researchers from Loughborough's Center for Lifestyle Medicine and Behavior (CLiMB) say the findings support those from the United States, which suggest that county/state rates of obesity are positively associated with voting for the Republican Party presidential candidate.

Speaking about the new study, lead author Amanda Daley, Professor of Behavioral Medicine and Director of CLiMB, said, "Health remains an important political issue and a top priority for voters. In this nationally representative sample, after adjusting for age group, gender, ethnicity, indicators of deprivation and country, voters for the Conservative Party had a higher BMI score and were more likely to be living with obesity than Labor and Liberal Democrats voters.

"This finding is notable as obesity increases the risk of morbidity, dying prematurely and has substantial economic consequences for [health care services](#) across the world. Given that almost 14 million people voted for the Conservative Party at the 2019 UK general election, the largest

majority since 1987, governments and public health agencies may benefit from focusing on the political affiliation of the public when developing [obesity](#) prevention and reduction strategies."

All the data for this study was taken from the Ipsos Knowledge Panel and was collected between 24 and 30 June 2021.

More information: A. J. Daley et al, Political voting in the United Kingdom 2019 general election and risk of living with obesity in a nationally representative sample, *International Journal of Obesity* (2024). [DOI: 10.1038/s41366-024-01569-5](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41366-024-01569-5)

Provided by Loughborough University

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