

Female gamers a new risk group for overweight

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This is an image of a weight scale. Credit: CDC/Debora Cartagena

Young women who play computer games are a new risk group for developing overweight and obesity. This is the finding of a study that includes more than 2,500 Swedes in their twenties.

In the current study, around 2,500 young adults between the ages of 20 and 24 responded to a survey on three different occasions: in 2007, 2008

and 2012. Researchers at Sahlgrenska Academy used the survey to investigate whether the amount of time [young people](#) spend e-mailing, chatting or playing computer games in their free time affects their BMI.

More likely to be overweight

The results show that [women](#) of normal weight who played computer games for at least 1 hour a day were more likely to develop overweight (measured as a BMI over 25) during the five-year study period compared with women who did not play.

Other factors taken into account

"The increased BMI in those who played computer games for more than two hours a day would for a young woman of average height and weight equal an additional weight gain of 3.7 kilos. That calculation takes other risk factors for obesity into account, such as age, occupation, total daily computer time, physical activity during free time, sleep and perceived social support," says Sara Thomée, researcher at Sahlgrenska Academy.

Need to identify causes

The same development was not found in men. It is unclear why only women gained [weight](#), according to Sara Thomée, who says further studies are needed to verify the results and identify possible causes.

Gothenburg researchers still conclude that young female gamers may be an important target group for preventive public health initiatives.

The article Leisure time computer use and overweight development in [young adults](#) - a prospective study was published in the scientific journal *BMC Public Health*.

More information: Leisure time computer use and overweight development in young adults, *BMC Public Health*, www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/15/839

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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