

# Study shows that controlling or 'wiping out' obesity, excess weight could avoid substantial numbers of premature deaths

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New research presented at the European Congress on Obesity in Glasgow, UK (28 April-1 May) shows that controlling or wiping out obesity and overweight would have a substantial impact in reducing premature deaths from non-communicable diseases, which is also a key target outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals. The study is by Niels Lund, Novo Nordisk, Denmark and Associate Professor Laurie Twells, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's, NL, Canada, and colleagues.

Obesity is a major contributor to [premature mortality](#) from the four major noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), namely cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes. Globally, NCDs account for 41 million deaths annually and 15 million of these are premature (occurring in people aged between 30 and 70 years). Furthermore, according to data from the Global Burden of Disease study, high BMI directly accounted for 4 million deaths in 2015 (in adults

aged 25 years or older).

In addition, NCDs pose a substantial economic burden to society. The achievement of the 'Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 3.4' of reducing premature mortality from NCDs by one third by 2030 from 2016 levels (the year the SDG targets were rolled out) requires intensified reduction in rates of [obesity](#). The aim of this study was to illustrate the projected impact of BMI on NCD-related premature mortality in 2030 in five high-income and upper-middle-income countries: United Kingdom, Canada, Brazil, Denmark and Mexico.

The researchers developed a BMI mortality model based on population projection data on age and gender distribution in the 5 countries with an assumed linear continuation of current BMI trends and applied associations between BMI and premature mortality from NCDs. The model was reviewed by independent experts within the field of obesity and health economics. The model compares three future scenarios for 2030: linear growth scenario (current BMI levels extrapolated linearly using extrapolation from the trend in the years 2000-2014); status quo scenario (current BMI levels remain unchanged until 2030), and no excess weight scenario (assuming no one will have BMI above 25 in the year 2030).

When compared to the linear growth scenario, the status quo scenario resulted in the following decrease in premature NCD-related deaths by 2030: 5% decrease in Brazil, Denmark, and Mexico, 6% in Canada, and 7% in United Kingdom. In contrast, if there is no overweight or obesity by 2030 (no excess weight scenario) premature mortality will decrease by 25% in Brazil, 26% in Denmark, 28% in Mexico, 30% in Canada, and 31% in United Kingdom.

The authors say: "This study provides important evidence on the extent to which excess BMI impacts the premature [mortality](#) from NCDs in selected countries. Addressing the growing burden of obesity is critical to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and requires timely and evidence-based measures to halt the rise and increase prevention and care efforts."

They add: "While eliminating excess weight is a highly hypothetical scenario, it shows the great impact obesity has on premature NCD deaths and what can be gained even by keeping obesity at today's rates until 2030."

Provided by European Association for the Study of Obesity

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