Living with Obesity and Gender

- Many studies have shown that men and women experience living with and being treated for obesity very differently.
  - Women tend to report worsening quality of life as obesity increases, with Caucasian women reporting the largest effects.
  - Women report significantly higher impairment of self-esteem with obesity, even when compared within racial groups.
  - Men were most likely to report the most impairment in physical function.

- Physicians tend to treat overweight and obesity differently in men and women.
  - Physicians are more likely to recommend weight loss to women in the overweight category (BMI 25 - 30) than to men of equal height and weight.
  - Physicians are less likely to recommend weight loss to women in the obese category (BMI >30) than to men of equal height and weight.

- In a study of stigma, women were less likely to have a negative response to obese peers than men. Of the groups studied, African-American women were the least likely to have a negative response to obese peers.

Historic Trends

- The prevalence of obesity showed little change from 1960-1980. However, this was followed by an increase of almost 8 percentage points between 1976-1994, with a similar increase between 1988-2000.
  - During this time of rapid growth in obesity, average BMI increased more rapidly in women than in men.

- Over the period 1999-2008, however, there were smaller changes in the prevalence among men than seen previously and no significant change in prevalence among women.

About the STOP Obesity Alliance

The Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance is a collaboration of nearly 70 consumer, provider, government, labor, business, health insurer and quality-of-care organizations working to drive innovative and practical strategies that combat obesity. Housed at The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, Department of Health Policy, the Alliance has centered on developing reports, policy recommendations, and tools for consumers and policy makers that are evidence-based and approved by consensus. The Alliance receives funding from founding sponsor, Sanofi. For more information, visit www.stopobesityalliance.org and follow the Alliance on Facebook and Twitter.
Resources