# Proposed BMI Overhaul Could Lead to Increased Obesity Classification in British Adults



A proposed overhaul of the body-mass-index (BMI) system could result in millions more British adults being classified as obese. The World Health Organization (WHO) currently uses BMI, a weight-to-height ratio, to assess disease risk associated with excess body fat. Presently, a BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 is deemed healthy, 25 to 29.9 is overweight, and 30 or above is considered obese, a categorization associated with increased risks of diabetes, heart attacks, and strokes.

Italian researchers suggest that for adults over 40, the obesity threshold should be lowered to a BMI of 27. Presenting their findings at the European Congress on Obesity in Venice, the researchers argue that aging bodies accumulate fat around the waist and lose muscle mass, factors not properly captured by the current BMI scale. Their study of 4,800 Italians aged 40 to 80 indicated that nearly 71% of men and 64% of women were obese based on body fat percentage, compared to only 38% and 41% respectively based on a BMI of 30 or higher.

Adopting a BMI threshold of 27 would better identify nearly 90% of individuals with dangerous fat levels. Professor Marwan El Ghoch and Professor Antonino De Lorenzo emphasized the importance of this new BMI cutoff for accurately assessing health risks in older adults. While the study suggests significant implications, it acknowledges limitations, including its Italian sample and lack of consideration for factors like diet and exercise. Further research is recommended to validate these findings globally.