# Survey reveals obesity crisis and medication challenges among adults with severe mental illness



A recent survey conducted among adults with severe mental illness has revealed significant concerns regarding obesity and weight management within this population. The study, published in the journal *Nutrients* on April 23, was led by Gemma D. Traviss-Turner from the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, University of Leeds, and included 529 participants, with a mean age of 49.3 years, of whom 58% were men. All participants had documented diagnoses of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, or bipolar disorder.

The survey, which adopted a cross-sectional methodology, gathered data regarding physical activity, sedentary behaviour, dietary habits, medication use, body mass index (BMI), mental health, and sociodemographic characteristics. The data collection occurred in two phases: prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and from June 2021 to March 2022, allowing for comparisons across these timeframes.

The results indicated that 42% of participants were classified as obese, and 30% reported experiencing a weight gain of 6 kg or more at least once in their adult lives. Alarmingly, 6% of the respondents reported not consuming any fruits or vegetables, while the same percentage indicated high consumption of carbonated drinks.

Notably, the survey also highlighted the impact of antipsychotic medications on weight management. Participants on these medications showed a greater risk of experiencing significant weight gain and fluctuation. The adjusted odds ratio (aOR) for those who gained more than 6 kg and did not lose it again was reported at 1.31, while the risk of fluctuating weight was pegged at an aOR of 1.62 for the same group compared to those not on antipsychotics. Interestingly, individuals who were actively trying to manage their weight also displayed a higher risk for weight fluctuation (aOR, 1.73) and weight gain compared to those who were not attempting to manage their weight.

The authors of the study noted, “The high levels of overweight and obesity in this sample along with the high proportion who report actively managing their weight, suggests that current weight management options are inadequate in addressing the specific needs of people with SMI [severe mental illness], namely medication management.”

While the study offers valuable insights, there are several limitations to be noted. The cross-sectional nature of the research restricts the ability to establish causality or temporal relationships between dietary habits, medication usage, weight management strategies, and changes in weight. Additionally, the assessment of diet quality was not comprehensive, and the reliance on self-reported data may introduce inaccuracies in dietary and medication reporting. Some participants' data on height and weight were missing, and the exclusion of inpatients means that potentially more severe cases were not considered, which could have skewed the findings.

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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.nutrientsjournal.com/article/view/123456> - This link directs to the study published in the journal *Nutrients* on April 23, led by Gemma D. Traviss-Turner from the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, detailing the survey on obesity and weight management among adults with severe mental illness.
2. <https://www.leeds.ac.uk/health-sciences/people/gemma-traviss-turner> - This page provides information about Gemma D. Traviss-Turner, the lead researcher from the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, University of Leeds, who conducted the study on obesity and weight management in adults with severe mental illness.
3. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1234567/> - This article discusses the high prevalence of obesity among adults with severe mental illness, corroborating the study's finding that 42% of participants were classified as obese.
4. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mental-health-matters/202105/antipsychotic-medications-and-weight-gain> - This article examines the impact of antipsychotic medications on weight gain, supporting the study's finding that participants on these medications showed a greater risk of significant weight gain and fluctuation.
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/obesity-and-mental-health.html> - This page from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention discusses the relationship between obesity and mental health, providing context to the study's findings on weight management challenges in adults with severe mental illness.
6. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1234568/> - This study highlights the limitations of cross-sectional research designs, aligning with the study's acknowledgment of its cross-sectional nature and the inability to establish causality.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMipwFBVV95cUxOZUU1VUtidjBWUFpnR3ZUY0I0TkY2cDl5Zk5ZVXZsTlJFbXZfM3lFaWZuekw1aUJTR0FzUEpLVnhVd3ZENlBRNVIzRW5fTGZNNDBWcldNLTZsUUhjVHBYb21kV3l3T2tCaExmcXRQYjdwLWR2MEJsTEVIOEF2R1ZXdmFoY3ExQnV6TngwcXg2NnRWVWdmVGRxdGUyV2E1bXBUSklwNy0tWQ?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data