

Obesity: A Threat for People and Pets

Understanding Human Obesity – Facts and Gaps

Royal Canin Conference:
The Future of Animal Companionship
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October 24, 2018

Disclosures

- **Professional fees**
 - Eisai
 - Nestlé
 - Novo Nordisk
 - Nutrisystem

- **Personal biases that favor:**
 - Evidence-based interventions, both prevention and treatment
 - Respect for people living with obesity
 - Critical thinking about all evidence

Presentation Objectives

- Physiology and impact
- Bias and misconceptions
- Opportunities for progress



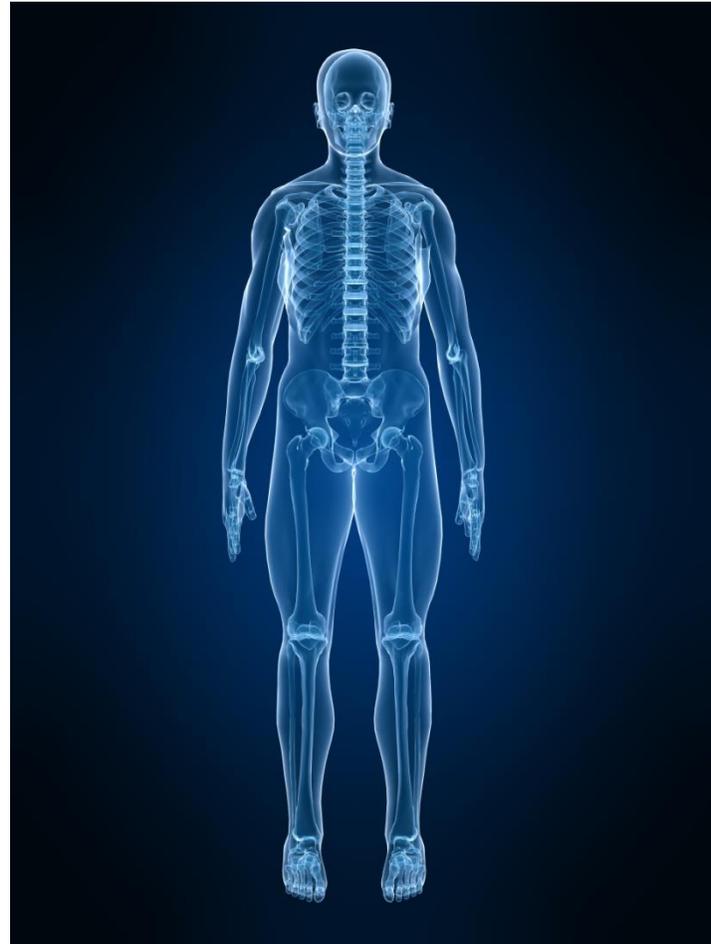
Source: OAC Image Gallery

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Physiology & Impact

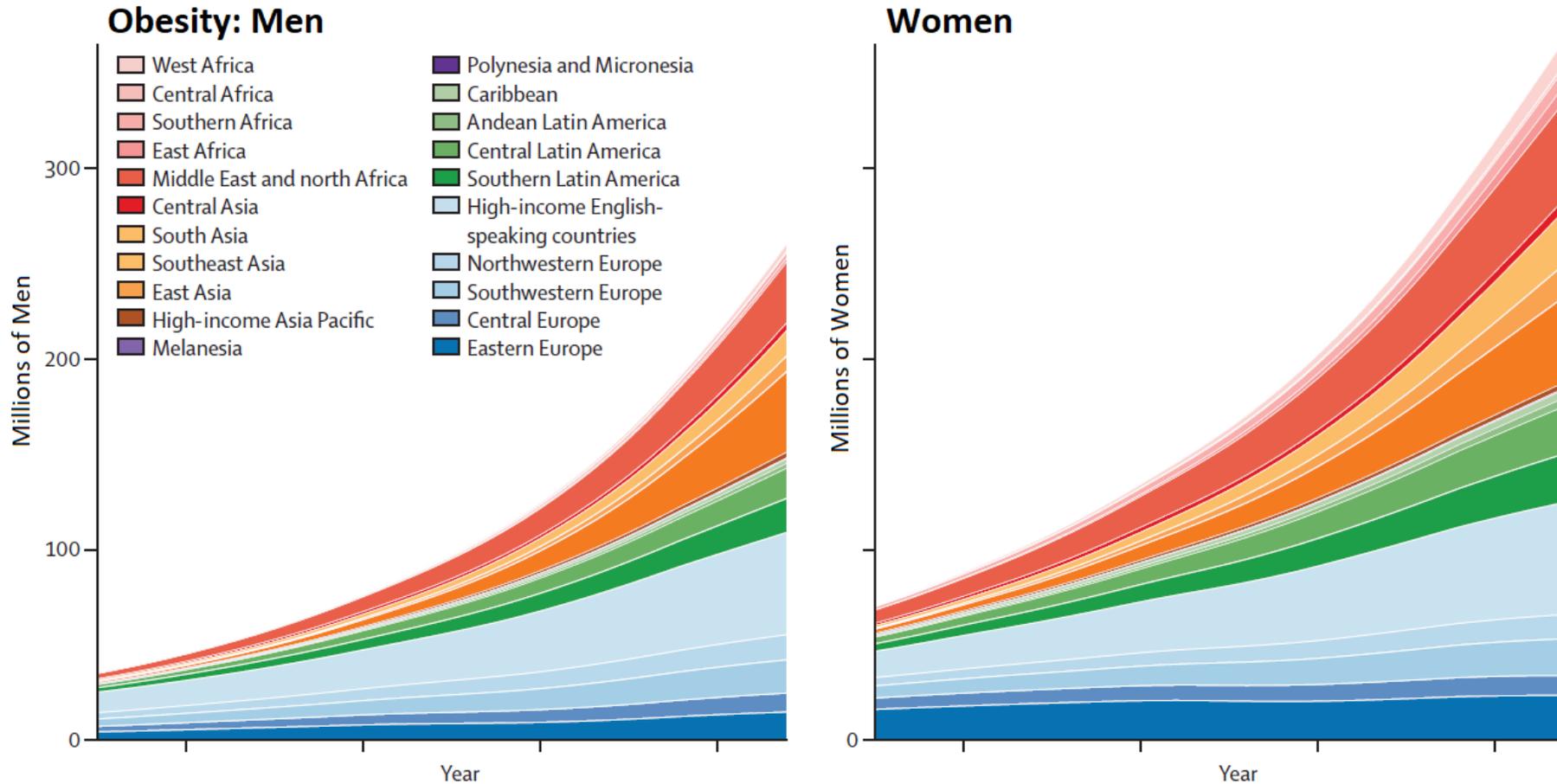
A Chronic Disease That Harms Every Organ System

- Pulmonary
- Liver
- Gall bladder
- Gynecologic
- Osteoarthritis
- Dermatologic
- Gout

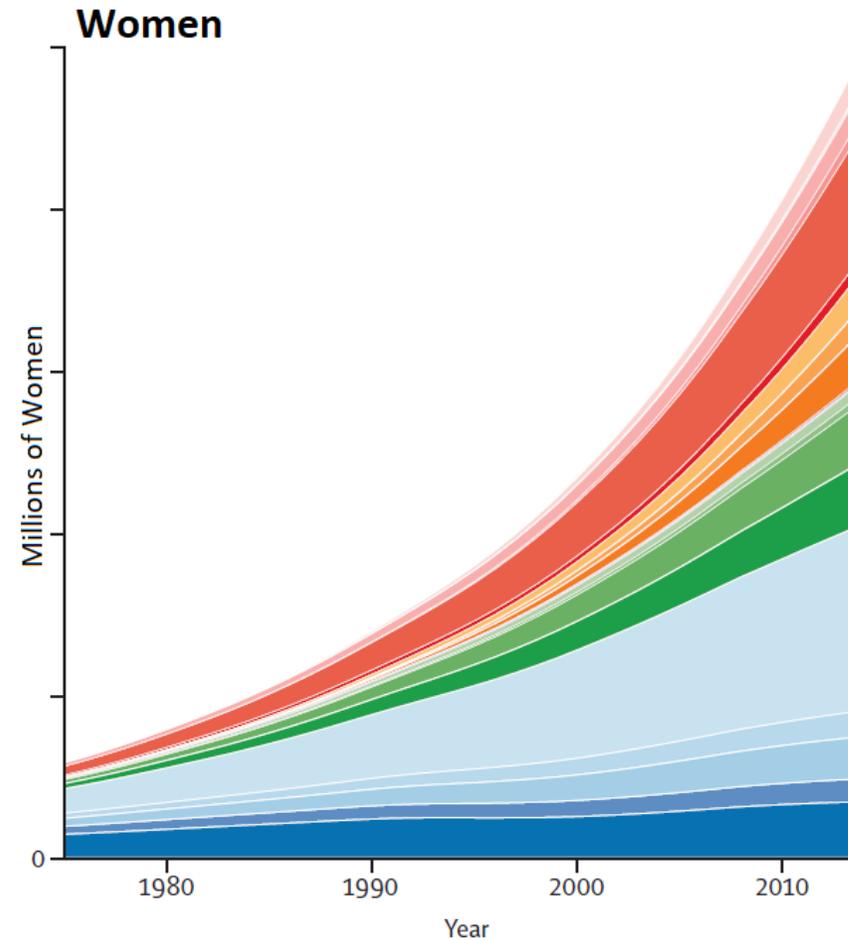
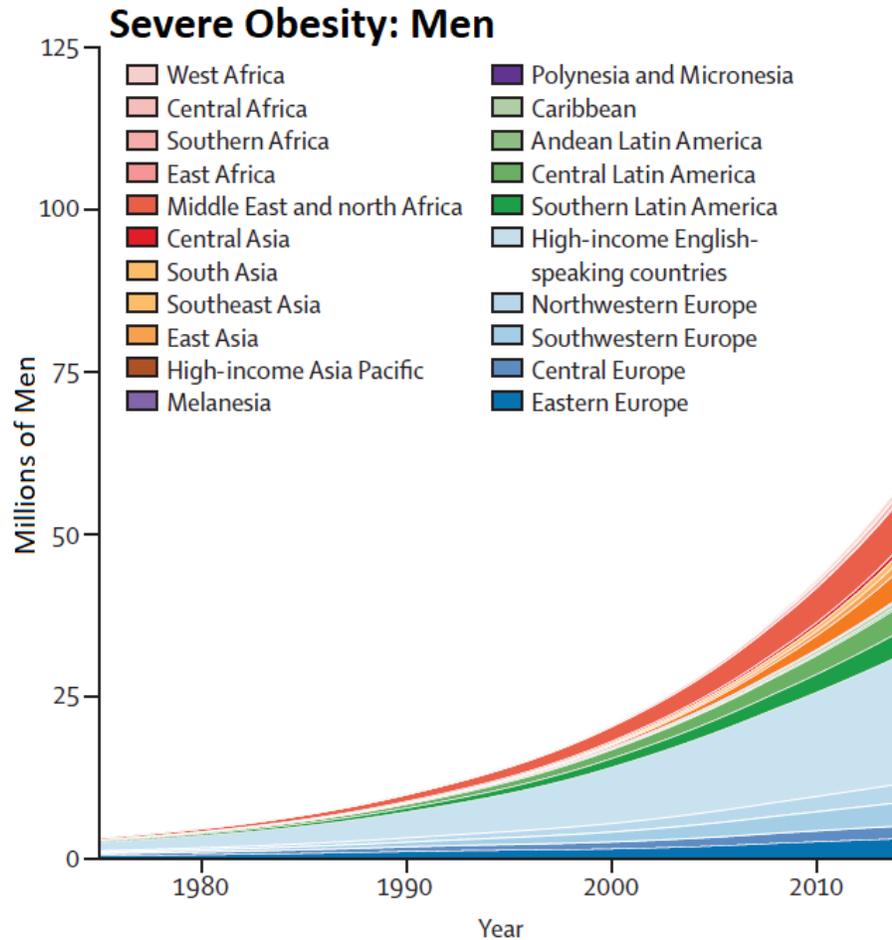


- Intracranial hypertension
- Stroke
- Cataracts
- Cardiovascular
- Diabetes
- Pancreatitis
- Cancer
- Phlebitis

Growing More Common Everywhere Around the World

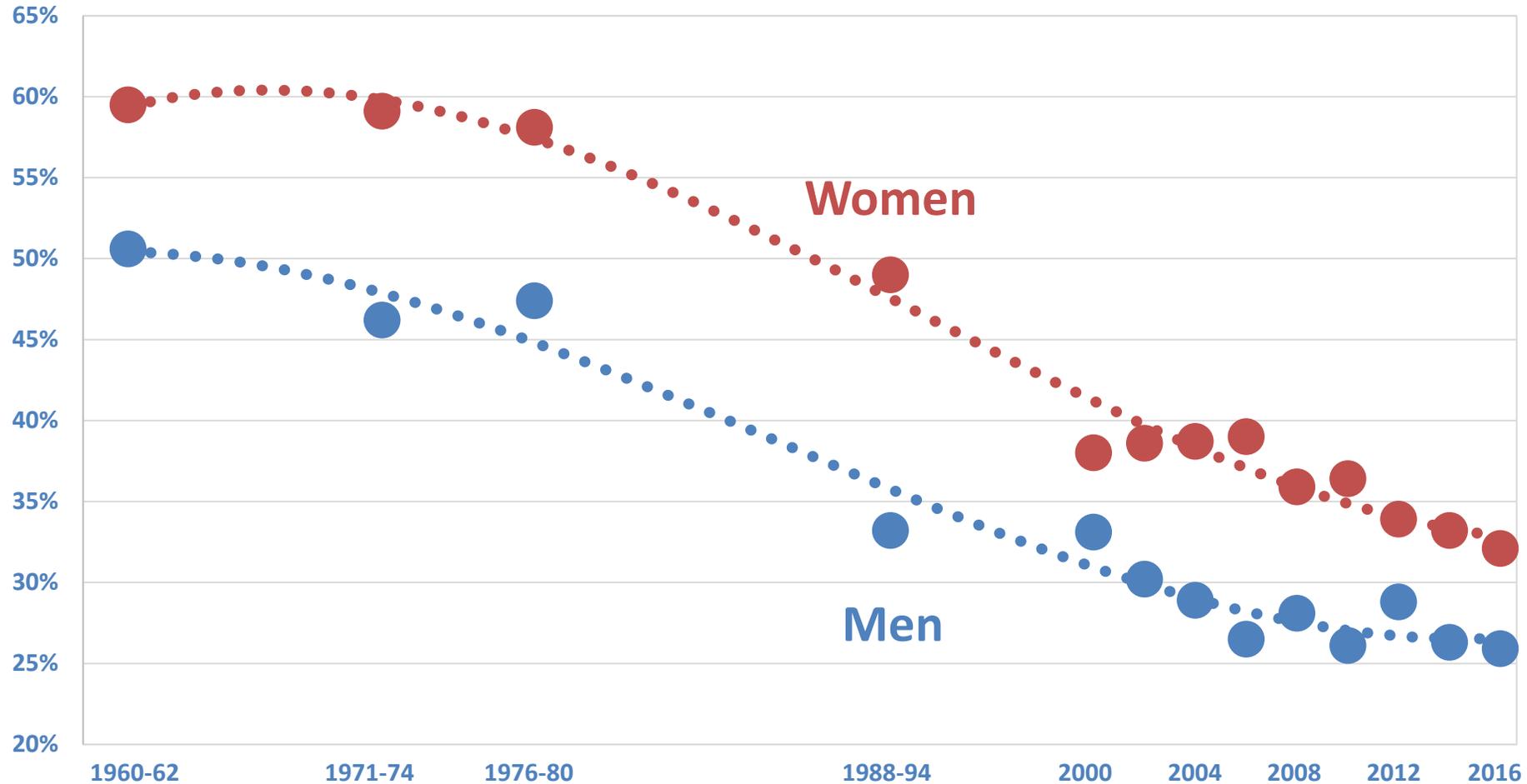


Severe Obesity Growing Fastest

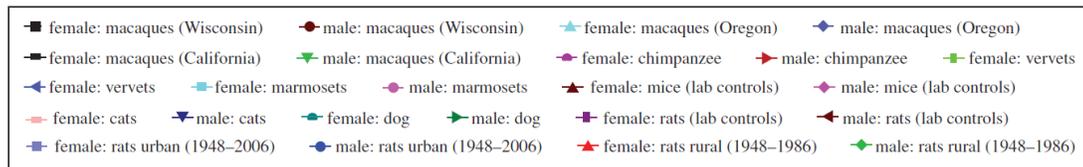
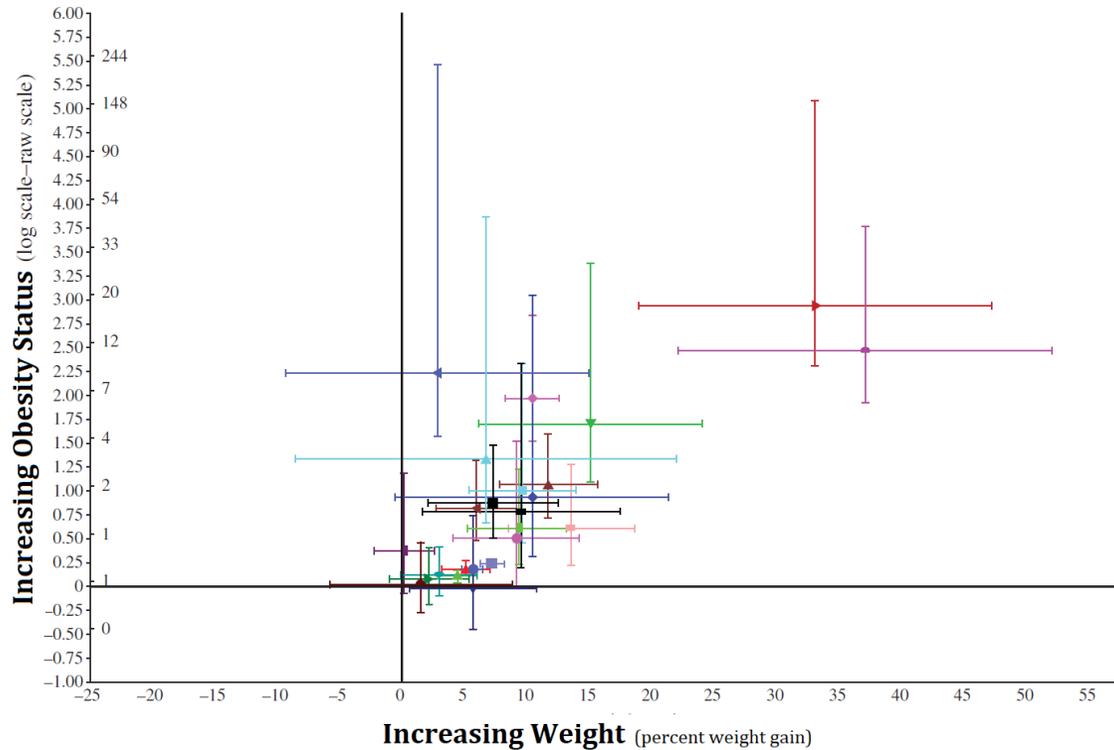


Reaching a Limit of People Susceptible to Weight Gain

U.S. Prevalence of BMI < 25, Men and Women Ages 20-74



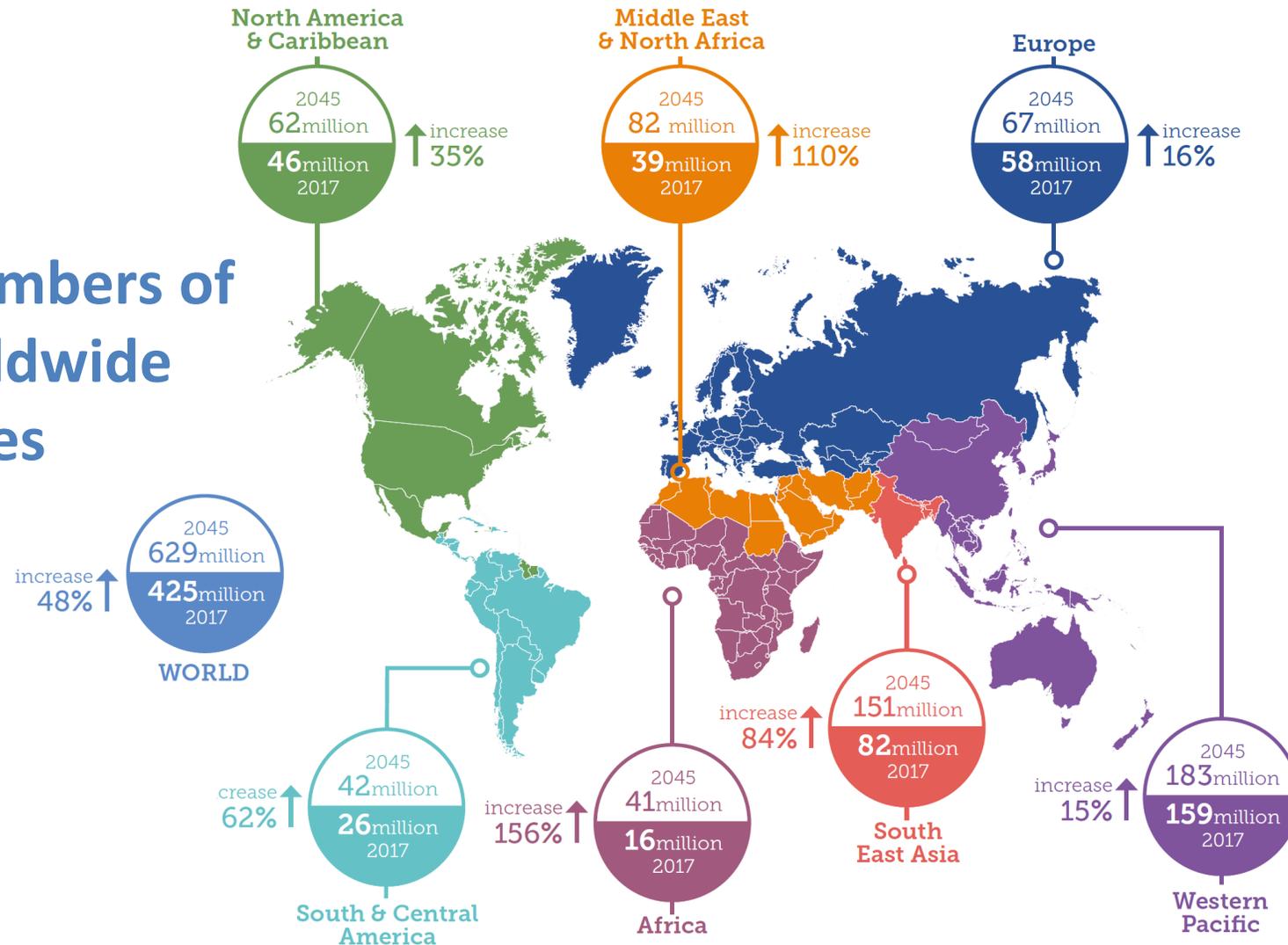
An Impact on Both Humans and Animals



- 20,000 animals
- 24 populations, 12 male, 12 female
- Eight species
- Research animals, feral rodents, domestic cats & dogs
- All trending to higher body weight
- Highly unlikely due to chance ($p=1.2 \times 10^{-7}$)

Building a Catastrophe of Chronic Diseases

Growing Numbers of People Worldwide with Diabetes



Source: IDF Diabetes Atlas - 8th Edition

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Bias/Misconceptions

Two Kinds of Bias

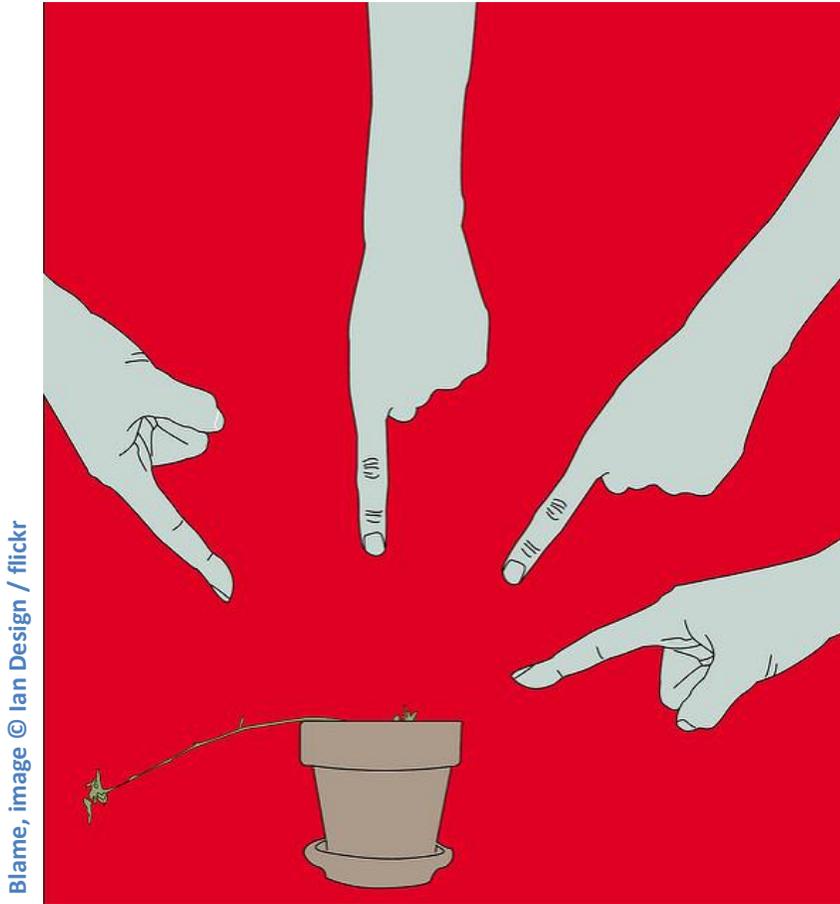
Are Pervasive in Nutrition and Obesity

- Intellectual bias favoring personal convictions
- Weight bias directed at people with obesity



God Judging Adam, Etching by William Blake / WikiArt

Bias Gets in the Way of Progress



Blame, image © Ian Design / flickr

- **Stigma leads to denial and inaction**
 - Blame directed at people with obesity
 - Assumptions of
 - Laziness
 - Poor discipline
 - Social rejection
- **People seek less care, get poor care, so health suffers**
- **Leads to ineffective policies**

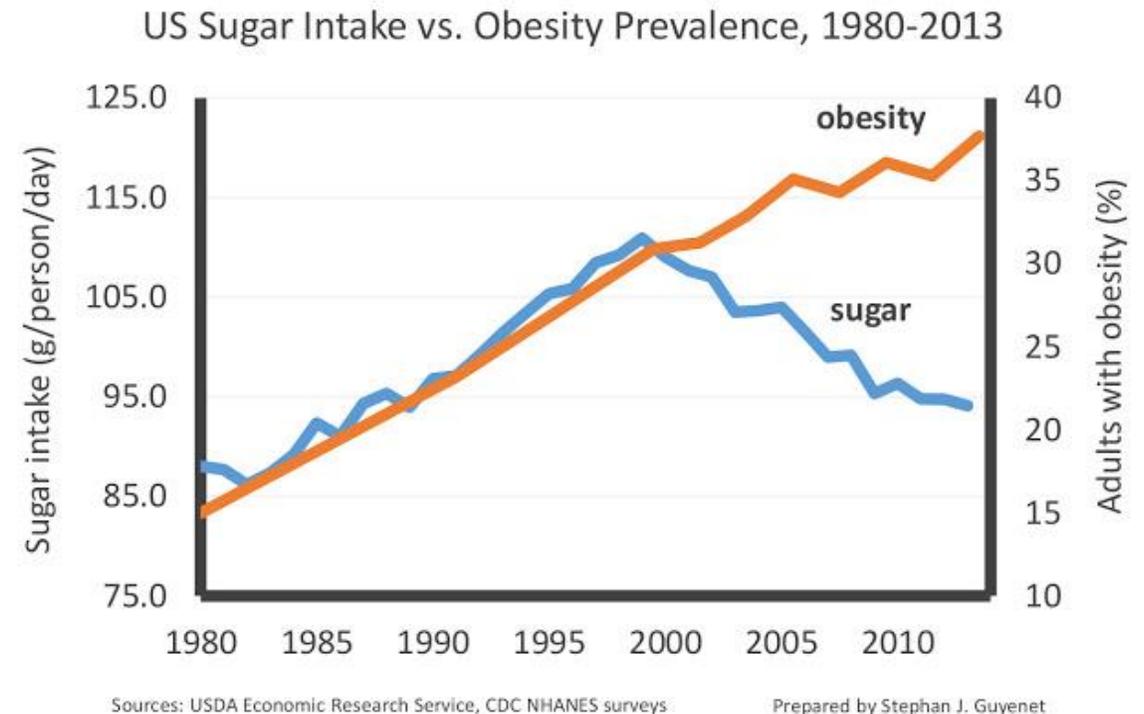
Bias Drives Policy Decisions That Affect Clinical Care

“Prevention obviously has to be the primary strategy for dealing with obesity, because there’s just too much obesity to treat.”

Simplistic Strategies

Are Having Little Obvious Impact on Obesity

- Soda and other targets for taxes are associated with obesity
- Correlation \neq causation
- Sugar consumption falling for two decades
- But obesity climbs regardless

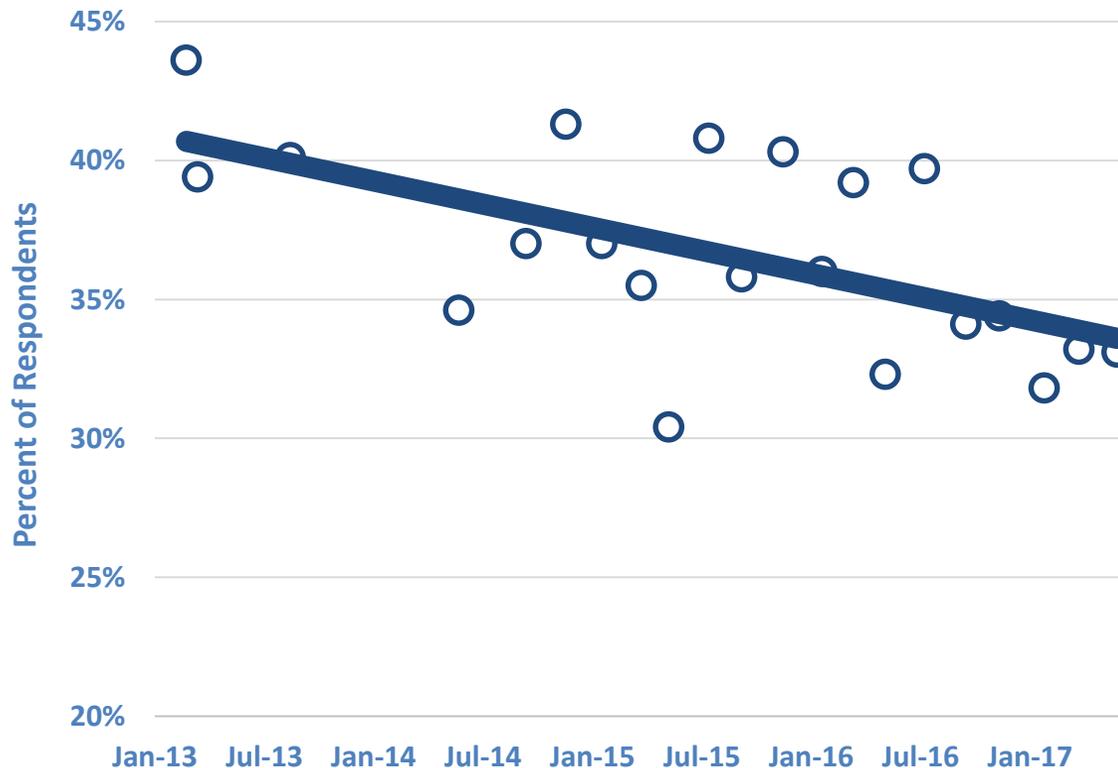


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Opportunities for Progress

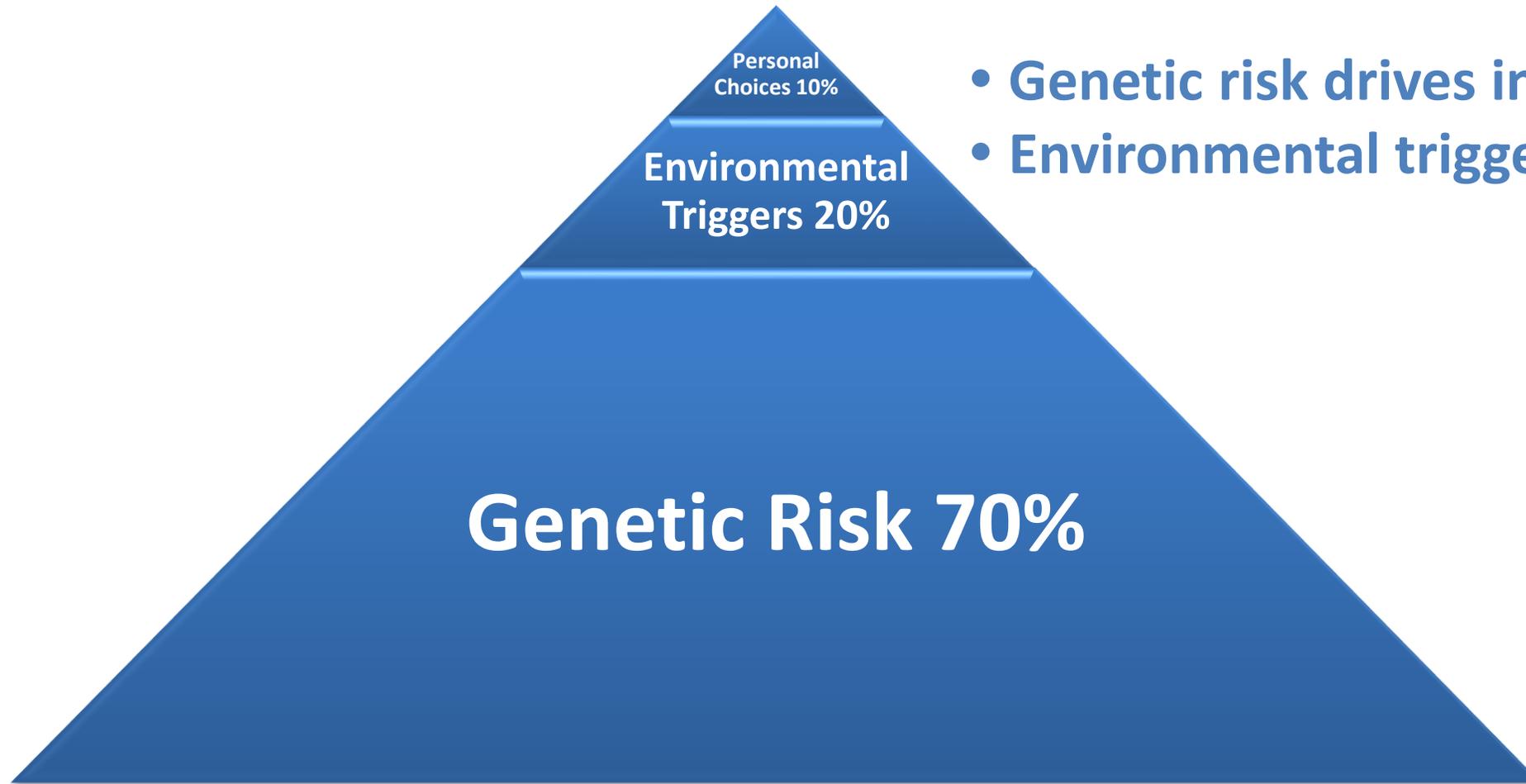
Public Views Are Shifting Slowly

“Obesity is a personal problem of bad choices”



- The public has long viewed obesity as a personal failure
- But opinions are shifting toward more diverse views of obesity

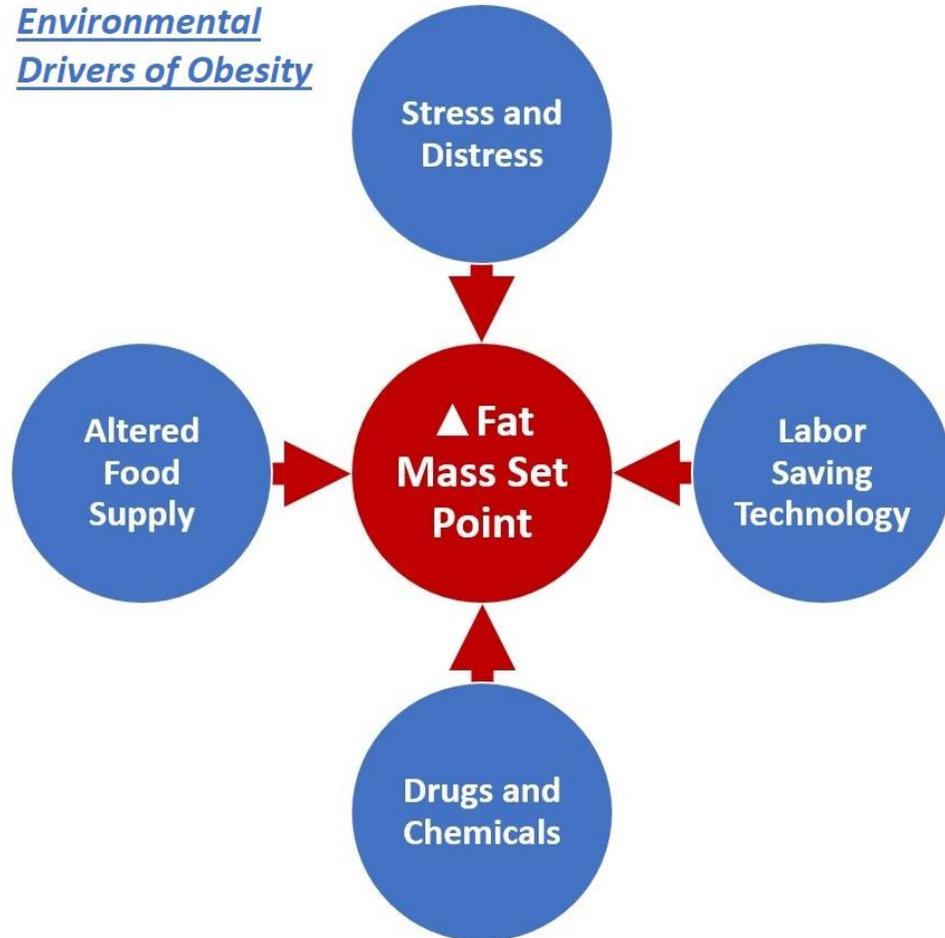
So What Drives Obesity?



- Genetic risk drives individual obesity
- Environmental triggers drive the epidemic

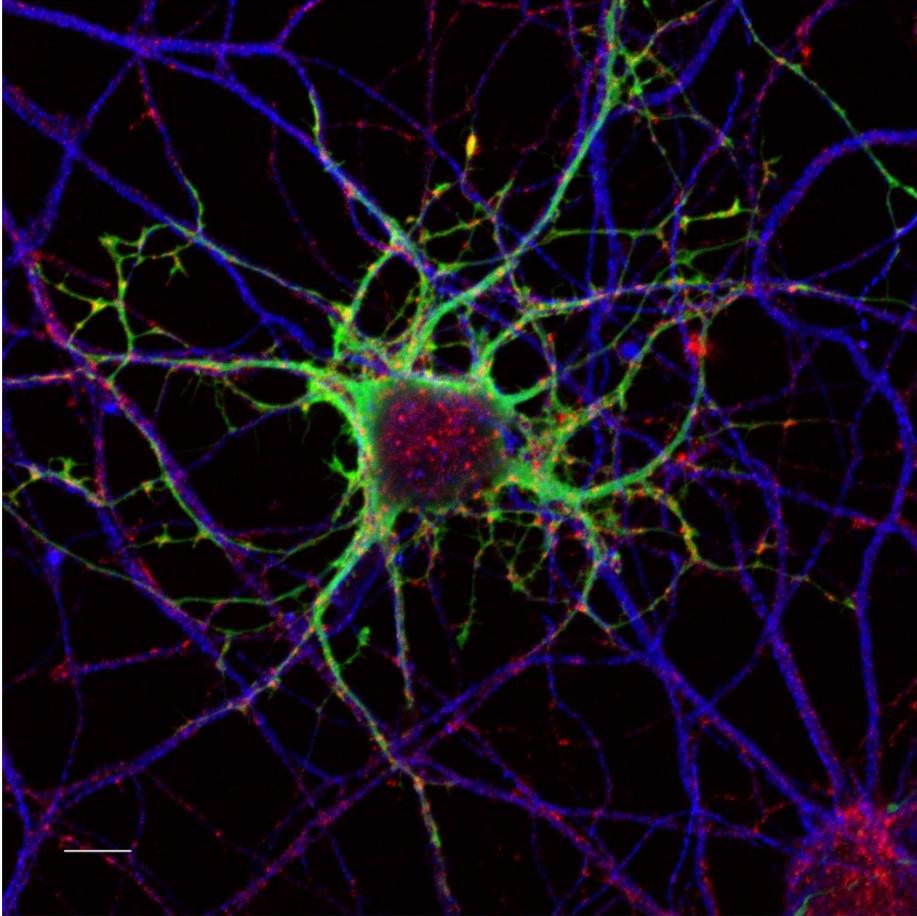
The Perfect Storm of Environmental Triggers

Environmental Drivers of Obesity



- Simplistic explanations are invariably wrong
- The more accurate view is a perfect storm of multiple factors

Obesity Science Is Rapidly Advancing



Neurons, photograph © ZEISS Microscopy / flickr

- Hypothalamus controls fat mass and blood sugar
- More therapies to manage obesity
- Bariatric surgery extends life and puts diabetes in remission

Self-Care Is Often the Only Option Available for Obesity



Many Health Plans Discourage People from Seeking Obesity Care



- Routine policy exclusions for obesity
“Regardless of any potential health benefit”
- Lifetime procedure caps
- High out of pocket costs
- Problematic reimbursement rates
and procedures
- But, obesity complications are fully covered

Options for Evidence-Based Care Are Growing



Summary of Opportunities

Better outcomes will require:

- **Removing barriers to obesity care**
 - Bias and stigma
 - Inadequate resources
 - Payment systems that favor complications of obesity
- **Tested, effective, systematic approaches to obesity prevention**
- **Research and innovation**



Targets of Opportunity, photograph by Randy Robertson / flickr

More Information



conscienhealth.org/news



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