

Discuss the Causes of the so Called ‘Obesity Crisis’ Facing the UK

The ‘obesity crisis’ facing the UK is a topic which has been looked at and researched by health and medical professionals over the last five to ten years. ‘Obesity crisis’ is the term used to label and describe the growing rate of people living with obesity. As described by Agha and Agha (2017) “Obesity is an abnormal accumulation of body fat (usually 20% above the normal ideal body weight) to the extent that it may have an adverse effect on health.”. The quantity of adults living with obesity within the UK has risen since 1993. In England 29% of adults are currently considered obese, with 23% in Wales, 29% in Scotland and 27% in Northern Ireland, as can be seen in the UK Parliament statistics (Parliament. House of Commons, 2019). With the volume of people currently living with obesity being so high, it is clear that something has changed. There are a vast amount of reasons as to the rise of the ‘obesity crisis’ in the UK, but whatever the cause, the rate of obesity is rising.

Firstly, a potential cause of obesity which is important but is not discussed as much as some of the other causes, is lack of sleep or poor-quality sleep. It has been shown that “shorter, worse quality and more frequently medicated, disturbed and inadequate sleep” were connected to people’s BMI being increased (Ellison et al 2013). Therefore, according to this study, people would gain weight by going to sleep late at night, having broken sleep, medicated sleep or just simply not getting enough sleep. This is not necessarily true however. In a more recent study, Ogilvie et al. (2017) argued that a lack of sleep or poor-quality sleep may cause a rise in obesity, however studies need to be undertaken to test the reverse of this. They suggest that the effects of good quality, good length and un-medicated sleep needs to be tested in order to see if there is a decrease in people’s BMI and subsequently a decrease in obesity. A way that they suggested undertaking this study was to delay school start times which would allow both children and parents to get longer, good quality periods of sleep. No study has yet been undertaken to substantially test this theory, so we are therefore unable to currently convincingly state that poor quality sleep causes a rise in a person’s BMI and obesity.

Another cause of obesity which is discussed in detail looks at where obesity begins. With the children. Childhood obesity is on the rise in all parts of the United Kingdom, as can be seen in the UK Parliament statistics mentioned previously. With every generation in recent times having more children living with obesity than the last, it is a growing concern for the United Kingdom. “The prevalence of obesity is higher in children who live in households where both the parents are overweight or obese.” (Agha et al 2017). If children suffer from obesity as a result of lack of exercise, diet or the environment that they are exposed to, they are unlikely to change these factors as they develop into adults. This will therefore lead to a greater volume of adults living with obesity in the future. The children of adults with bad diets, lack of exercise and bad environments will tend to take on their parents’ traits and will continue the cycle of obesity. If only one parent is living with obesity when a child is one or two years old, then the chances of them suffering from obesity as an adult is around 30% higher than that of a child who does not have a parent suffering from obesity. However, this increases by seventeen times for a child between fifteen and seventeen years old (Agha et al 2017). It is not just the characteristics of parent’s or the environment that can affect children, the increase

of availability to eat unhealthy food has played a big impact for the general health of people in the United Kingdom and even the whole world.

Fenton, K. (2017) stated that there has been an increase in families eating meals out at restaurants or ordering takeaways which is contributing to the increase of obesity in families. The majority of restaurants and takeaways contain unhealthy preservatives or components to bulk out the meals as well as being cooked in unhealthy ways such as frying both in a pan and in a deep fat fryer. The foods tend to contain a high volume of fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar which is not good to consume in great quantities and all, to some degree, cause people to become unhealthy and gain weight. The quantity of takeaways and restaurants has increased over the last five years by double in most areas in the United Kingdom (Food environment assessment tool 2018). With this increasing two-fold in such a short time, it has become easier for parents and even children to be able to buy unhealthy food. It is not uncommon for parents to buy something that is quick and easy such as a takeaway for them and their children in order to save time and to avoid cooking. It is also very common to see children stopping by at sweet shops or takeaway fast food chains on their way home from school, college or university for a unhealthy snack.

The availability of fast food and junk food goes hand in hand with the increased volume of adverts and amount of money put into advertising. Fast food advertising in the United Kingdom is everywhere that it can possibly be posted. It can be seen on the side of buses, bus stops, tube adverts, telephone boxes, the side of buildings, billboards, advertising panels, tv, on the radio and more. This has a big impact on the general public as a person is always reminded of the temptation to get something unhealthy to eat or drink. It preys on people's desire to consume high fat and high sugar products. However, in February 2019 Transport for London decided to ban junk food adverts in a hope to help battle childhood obesity (Transport for London 2018). Transport for London also did a survey of Londoner's where they found that "87% of young people found adverts for high fat, salt and sugar products appealing" (Transport for London 2018). This shows how impactful advertising can be as this survey portrays the fact that almost nine out of ten young people like seeing junk food adverts. With the ratio of young people liking these adverts being so high, it is fair to assume that they would therefore also be tempted and even persuaded by the adverts to go and buy unhealthy food or drink. Advertising is there to try and persuade people to go and buy the food that is being advertised and as the food that is advertised is majority unhealthy this is one of the major causes of the 'obesity crisis' facing the United Kingdom.

Another cause for the 'obesity crisis' in the United Kingdom is the unhealthy food available to families. Specifically looking in poorer areas as it is cheaper to purchase unhealthy food than fresh, healthy food such as fruit and vegetables. Research by Jones et al (2014) shows that the mean price in 2012 per 1000 kcal for unhealthy food and drinks was £2.50 and £7.49 for healthy foods and drinks. That is a mean difference of £4.99 meaning that it costs almost three times the price, on average, to buy healthy food instead of unhealthy food. In poor areas where people's money is very limited, they may not be able to afford to buy the more expensive healthy foods and are therefore restricted in what foods and drinks they can buy. This leaves them with only one option of being forced into buying the unhealthy foods and therefore having a bad diet that would consist of too much fat, saturated fat, salt and sugars resulting in weight gain and ultimately obesity or at the very least, poor health. This would affect the whole family and would give the parents and the children alike poor diets.

There are many causes of the 'obesity crisis' facing the United Kingdom. From lack of money for healthy items to environmental factors for children, they all contribute towards the 'obesity crisis'. It is slowly becoming more normalised to see overweight people or people living with obesity everywhere you look. It is an epidemic that is sweeping the United Kingdom and taking it by storm. Media and research focus more on some causes than others but all of the causes are equally as important as each other.

1442 Words

References

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LEVEL 4

SEMESTER 1 & 2

MODULE CODE: SHSS4062
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE

ASSESSMENT TYPE: ASSIGNMENT

ASSESSMENT/COMPONENT: 1

COMPONENT WEIGHTING: 50 %

WORD COUNT: 1500 WORDS

MODULE TUTOR: GERAINT FORSTER

Task

Choose **ONE** of the essay titles allocated to your degree group below, and using **relevant and reliable research** to support your points, write a 1500 word essay on that topic. Pay particular attention to the **structure and referencing** of the essay, as these correspond to a large proportion of the available marks. Please refer to your lecture notes on referencing and essay writing in order to ensure you are following the correct format – you must reference as described in the UWTSD Harvard Referencing Handbook.

SUBMISSION DETAILS: Submit via turnitin by 3:00pm on 1st November 2019

Essay titles (please choose only ONE of these, from the relevant options for your degree):

BA Physical Education:

1. Discuss the advantages of children learning outdoors.
2. Discuss whether Physical Education should be a compulsory part of the school curriculum.
3. Discuss the health promotion role of Physical Education.

BA Outdoor Adventure Education:

1. Discuss the components of a good essay, and identify common mistakes to avoid.
2. Discuss the key features of an "adventurous" activity.
3. Discuss whether there really is a need for children to play freely outdoors.

BSc Health, Nutrition and Lifestyle:

1. Discuss the components of a good essay, and identify common mistakes to avoid.
2. Discuss the role of Registered Nutritionists, Registered Dieticians, Nutritional Therapists and other professions who offer dietary advice in the United Kingdom. Consider the inequality in qualifications and codes of conduct in relation to the above.
3. **Discuss the causes of the so called 'obesity crisis' facing the UK.**

BSc Sport Therapy:

1. Discuss the components of a good essay, and identify common mistakes to avoid.
2. Discuss why the Society of Sports Therapists should be statutory regulated by the Health Care and Professions Council.
3. Discuss the role of a pitchside first aider in managing complex sports trauma.

Sport, Health & Outdoor Education

Assessment Feedback Sheet

Student No./Name:

Module: Professional Development and Practice

Module Code: SHSS4062

Personal Evaluation – to support your academic progress please complete the section below BEFORE submitting your work.									
What do you consider to be the best aspects of this work?	The unbiased approach and the structure of the assignment.								
Which aspects do you consider could have been improved in this piece of work?	Expanding on the facts provided by the sources a bit more.								
What have you found most satisfying whilst undertaking this submission?	I have enjoyed looking and researching in an area of health and nutrition that I have a strong interest in.								
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Learning Outcome	GRADE							
		Poor 0-25%	Unsatisfactory 26-39%	Satisfactory 40 – 49%	Good 50 – 59%	Very Good 60 – 69%	Excellent 70 – 85%	Exceptional 86– 100%	%
Essay content and quality of resources used	1								30%
Referencing within the essay	1								20%
Correctly constructed reference list	1								20%
Structure of essay and clarity of writing	1								30%
It is expected that students will present work that is proof read, correctly referenced and adheres to the Assessment Checklist . Therefore a range of 0 – 10 marks will be deducted for non-completion of any of the points on the checklist below .									

TUTOR COMMENTS:**Submission date: 1/11/19
via Turnitin****Return date: 8/11/19
(at least within 4 weeks)****Tutor:****Mark:**

Assignment Checklist

- ☒ Please complete the **Personal Evaluation** section of the Assessment Feedback sheet, add your name and details, and paste the whole of this assignment document into the front of your assignment
- ☒ Submission is a **single .pdf file, clearly labelled** with your name and module code
- ☒ Font style - Times New Roman, size -12 for text and 14 for headings
- ☒ Ink colour – black only
- ☒ Line spacing – 1.5 line spacing and 2cm- 2.5cm page margins
- ☒ Quotations more than three lines to be indented 1 line spacing
- ☒ One line space between paragraphs, paragraphs must be left aligned
- ☒ Pagination (your assignment should have **page numbers**)
- ☒ All tables and figures are internally referenced and have a title
- ☒ **Word count** checked and written at end of text (before references and any appendix)
- ☒ Assignment is within 10% of the word limit (excluding references and any appendices)
- ☒ **All** references in the text are included in the reference list
- ☒ **Correct referencing as described in UWTSD Harvard Referencing Handbook on the Library website** <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/library-and-learning-resources/infoskills/harvard-eng.PDF>
- ☒ Correct spelling and punctuation, using **UK English**
- ☒ Grammar and syntax correct- double check anything that has a green line under it
- ☒ I have read my assignment out loud to myself and it makes sense and is easy to read
- ☒ Somebody else has read my work and it makes sense to him or her!
- ☒ **I have checked and I have not plagiarised**

**Failure to follow these guidelines will
cost you marks!**