

# OBEESITY: THE HARD FACTS

Obesity is a chronic, relapsing, and life-long disease which needs to be approached in the same way as other chronic diseases<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore imperative that policies which consider not only primary prevention, but also treatment and management along the life-course are targeted as an area for immediate action and priority for research and innovation at European level.

## OBEESITY IS ONE OF THE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH AND DISABILITY WORLDWIDE<sup>2</sup>

**23%**

of adults were estimated to have **obesity** and **36% pre-obesity** in the European Union in 2016<sup>1</sup>

Obesity is the

**4<sup>th</sup>**

highest independent **cause of premature mortality**<sup>3</sup>

**10-13%**

of deaths in different parts of Europe are linked to **obesity**<sup>2</sup>

**~7%**

of the **national budgets across the EU** is spent on non-communicable diseases associated with **obesity** every year<sup>1</sup>

**8.4%**

of OECD countries **health budget is expected to be spent on obesity and related diseases** from 2020-2050 if obesity prevalence continues at the current rate<sup>3</sup>

Pre-obesity (overweight) and obesity are medical conditions marked by an abnormal and/or excessive accumulation of body fat that presents a risk to health. Obesity is a chronic relapsing disease, which in turn acts as a gateway to a range of other non-communicable diseases<sup>1</sup>, such as:



**Diabetes**

**Cardiovascular diseases**



**Cancer**

By approaching obesity in the same way as other non-communicable diseases, we could prevent over 230 complications of obesity and specifically other major NCDs<sup>2</sup>, including up to:



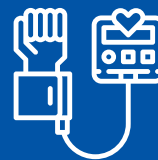
**80%**

of type 2 diabetes



**35%**

of ischaemic heart disease



**55%**

of hypertensive disease among adults



**20%**

of adult cancers - including cancers of the colon, rectum, breast, endometrium, liver, kidney

In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for people living with pre-obesity and obesity we must work together to look past primary prevention, and instead consider the knock-on effects that good management and treatment could have for those currently living with obesity and prevention of complications.

### REFERENCES:

<sup>1</sup>European Commission. Knowledge for policy: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Knowledge Gateway. [online] Available at: [https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/health-promotion-knowledge-gateway/obesity\\_en](https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/health-promotion-knowledge-gateway/obesity_en) [Accessed 2 Aug. 2021].

<sup>2</sup>Frühbeck, G., Toplak, H., Woodward, E., Yumuk, V., Maislos, M. and Oppert, J.-M. (2013). Obesity: The Gateway to Ill Health - an EASO Position Statement on a Rising Public Health, Clinical and Scientific Challenge in Europe. Obesity Facts, 6(2), pp.117-120.

<sup>3</sup>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2019). The Heavy Burden of Obesity. Health Policy Studies. [online] Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/health/the-heavy-burden-of-obesity-67450d67-en.htm> [Accessed 2 Aug. 2021]