

6<sup>th</sup> World Congress on

# Obesity

August 08-10, 2016 Toronto, Canada

## Impact of obesity during the hiring process: French case focused on two different jobs

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Obesity has become an epidemic in many parts of the world. Although much research and conferences on obesity are mainly structured around health and disorders, one social impact is almost avoided on all topics about obesity – obesity and its consequences vis-à-vis the labor market. Indeed, getting into the labor market is an important milestone in stepping into adulthood, but unfortunately for people who are obese and whose bodies don't conform to mass standards, it could be another social or moral sanction. More generally, the life of those dealing with obesity is harder in all fields. Moreover, these stereotypes are biases established in childhood. In France, studies have shown that obesity is a discriminating factor in the recruitment process. In 2005, Professor Jean-François Amadiou and his team (University Paris 1 Pantheon – Sorbonne) conducted a study which showed that an obese person was 25% less likely of getting a job as a teleoperator. Today, obesity can be recognized as a disability. However, recruitment processes and codes of conduct for Human Resources professionals have not changed. Otherwise-known, we are heading towards greater equal treatment? The objective of the paper is to explore the level of discrimination against obese individuals during the recruitment process. Two 26-year-old women and two different professions are chosen – a salesperson and an executive assistant (a client facing job and non-client facing job). A testing method is used to measure this impact. For each role, 100 CV are sent. Each CV outlines identical training and skillset, only the photo attached to the CV had been altered (Picture of an obese and a standard woman). Moreover, to increase the validity of the data and to control our tested variable, we applied a CV rotation. The result showed that obesity still has a negative connotation and was subject to many stereotypes. Our sample (n=200) is representative in many ways. Regardless of the role - whether salesperson or executive assistant, the obese applicant has at least 50% less chance of getting a job interview ( $p < 0.001$ ). Future qualitative research should suggest similar results for the entire recruitment process mainly by interviews.

### Biography

Sevag Kertechian is a PhD student from Pantheon – Sorbonne University. He belongs to the PRISM laboratory and he has been a member of the Discrimination Observatory since 2013. For over two years, he has worked on the topic of how appearance – more precisely dress and overall demeanour, influences the recruitment and human resources industry. His subject thesis, which is in its conclusion phase, focuses on the relation between appearance and personality/lifestyle traits.

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