

# Significant Role of Anxiety and its Implications on Obesity

Van Garcia\*

Biomedical Research and Innovation Platform, South African Medical Research Council, Tygerberg, Cape Town, South Africa

## Introduction

Obesity is linked to a number of health problems, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, and cancer. Because of the exorbitant health-care expenditures connected with these disorders, some experts believe they will constitute a serious danger to the economy of the United States in the coming decades.

Anxiety is a natural response to the challenges we face on a daily basis. However, for some people, anxiety can be so overwhelming that it interferes with their ability to do daily tasks and operate normally in other aspects of life. Anxiety disorders come in a variety of forms, including panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder, each with its own set of symptoms. While each anxiety disorder is unique, the common thread is a continuous feeling of fear or worry in settings where others would not feel threatened [1].

If an anxiety condition is not treated, the symptoms can have a long-term negative effect on a person's physical and mental health. Some people may acquire additional mental health issues later in life, such as depression or social anxiety. Some anxiety sufferers may begin to abuse drugs and/or alcohol in an attempt to cope with the terrible symptoms of anxiety, which can lead to the development of a substance use disorder. Furthermore, persons suffering from anxiety may find it more difficult to keep a job or maintain healthy interpersonal interactions. Fortunately, there are a variety of therapy options available to assist someone suffering from anxiety in learning to manage their symptoms and moving on to a better life.

**Obesity and Anxiety:** An association between anxiety and obesity has been established by a large body of research. While obesity may not directly cause anxiety, some evidence suggests that it contributes to anxiety by disrupting a person's hormones, which can then lead to other anxiety-producing behaviours. However, it has been hypothesised that worry may have a role in certain situations that may eventually lead to obesity development.

1) Anxiety causes increased cortisol levels, which cause fat to store up in the stomach and lead to weight gain. The longer a person is stressed and anxious, the more weight he or she is likely to gain.

2) Digestion alterations, such as slower digestion, are common in nervous people and can contribute to weight gain as a result of the stress.

3) Anxiety can lead to increased weariness and a general lack of energy, causing a person to become less active. The body cannot burn calories without frequent movement, and when not enough calories are expended on a daily basis, weight gain occurs.

4) Anxiety drugs like Xanax and other anti-anxiety meds can cause lethargy and have been connected to weight gain in the past.

5) Finally, people who are feeling high levels of worry frequently resort to food for consolation. Consuming food, even when not hungry, can occur when a person feels worried, whether to meet an emotional need or as a way of coping with inner turmoil. Weight gain is likely to develop if this unhealthy coping style is used on a regular basis [2].

**Consequences of dealing with both anxiety and weight problems:** Being overweight and having worry or stress can generate a lot of stress

in a person's life, and it can have a negative impact on their overall health. If both the anxiety and the weight issues are not effectively treated, the following negative outcomes are more likely to develop:

Other mental health disorders, such as depression, developing or deteriorating

- 1) Increased weight gain
- 2) Poor overall quality of life
- 3) Inability to enjoy some things on a daily basis
- 4) Withdrawal from family and friends
- 5) Low self-esteem
- 6) Isolation from others
- 7) Family stress and conflict
- 8) Serious health issues, such as heart disease, Type 2 Diabetes, sleep apnea, and osteoarthritis
- 9) Thoughts and actions that is suicidal

**Substance Abuse:** A small percentage of obese people seeking weight reduction treatment are actively abusing substances. Weight loss treatment is deemed contraindicated if you are actively using or abusing the substance. Approximately 10% of bariatric surgery candidates indicate a history of illicit drug use or alcoholism, which is greater than the general population. Surprisingly, two studies reveal that people with extreme obesity and a lifetime history of substance addiction lose more weight than others who have never used drugs. These people are thought to have learned impulse control and self-regulation skills that helped them overcome their drug and alcohol addictions and that will also help them control their eating habits after bariatric surgery [3].

**Mental Health Treatment:** Many obese individuals have sought mental health treatment to help them change their eating habits or deal with the emotional effects of the disease. Approximately half of bariatric surgery candidates had a history of mental health care, and up to 40% have received treatment (psychotherapy or pharmacotherapy) at the time of surgery. Psychiatric drugs, particularly antipsychotics and some antidepressant classes, might contribute to weight gain and/or hinder weight control efforts. Little is known about how these drugs interact with various bariatric surgery procedures at this time. After surgery, alterations in medication absorption may occur, and quick changes in body weight and fat mass may also affect the medication's efficacy and tolerance [4].

\*Corresponding author: Van Garcia, Biomedical Research and Innovation Platform, South African Medical Research Council, Tygerberg, Cape Town, South Africa; E-mail: [vangracia@mrc.ac.za](mailto:vangracia@mrc.ac.za)

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**Body Image:** Obesity has a negative impact on one's health and quality of life. A number of studies have found a link between being overweight and having a lower quality of life. Individuals frequently report considerable physical and vocational challenges. Many people are inclined to seek weight loss treatment because of these disadvantages [5].

Many people's quality of life is influenced by their body image. Individuals who are overweight, as well as women and girls of medium weight, frequently experience body image dissatisfaction. Although people can indicate unhappiness with their complete bodies or specific features, the degree of discontent appears to be closely proportional to the amount of excess weight they have. Body image dissatisfaction is thought to play a role in the choice to seek weight loss treatment, even when there are serious weight-related health concerns.

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