

June 2014

Fact Sheet

A Look at the Relationship Between Socio-Economic Status and Obesity

The DON SCN strives to improve the health and well-being of individual Albertans and our communities through a collaborative network that: encourages uptake of best practices, promotes improvements, and champions innovation in nutrition and in the prevention and management of diabetes and obesity across the health system to promote equitable access, quality and sustainability.

DON SCN Fast Facts

- In 2012, 4 in 10 Albertans were overweight and 3 in 10 were obese.
- While obesity is lower at higher income, being overweight is more likely with higher income.
- In females, obesity is less likely with higher income, a pattern that is not seen in males.
- Obesity is twice as common in females with the lowest income level (19%), compared to those with the highest income level (38%).
- Obesity is more common among persons with less than a high school diploma (35%) and lowest among persons with at least a university degree (21%).
- Obesity is more common among Caucasians (29%) and native-English speakers (29%), than among non-Caucasians (23%) and those who speak other languages (19%).

How Does Obesity Compare Across Income Levels In Alberta?

- Overweight is more common in the highest income level (43%) and lowest in the lowest income level (33%).
- Obesity is more common in the lowest income level (35%) and lowest in the highest income level, (25%) **(Figure 1)**.
- The difference in obesity is more profound by household income level for females than males.
- Obesity is highest among females with the lowest household income (38%) and lowest among females with the highest income level (19%) **(Figure 2)**.

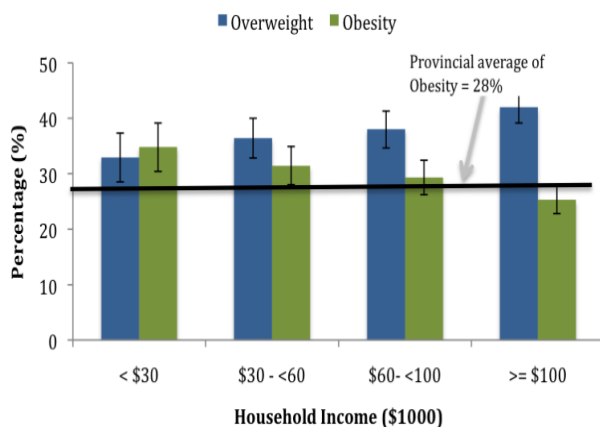


Figure 1. *The Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity by Household Income.*

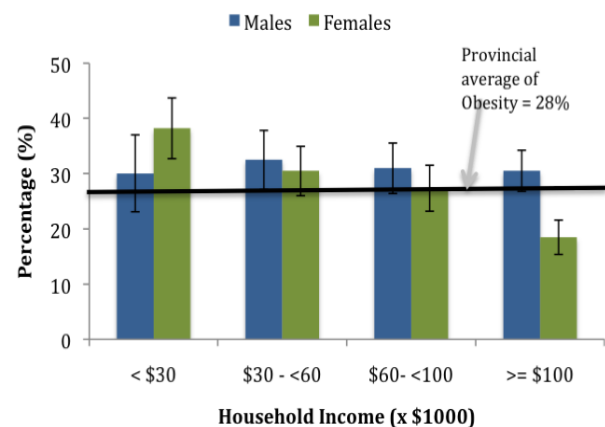


Figure 2. *The Prevalence of Obesity Among Males and Females by Household Income.*

How Does Obesity Compare Across Educational Level in Alberta?

- As with income, overweight tends to be more common with higher education level, whereas obesity is less common among those with more education.
- Obesity is highest among persons with less than a high school diploma (35%) and lowest among persons with at least a university degree (21%) (Figure 3).

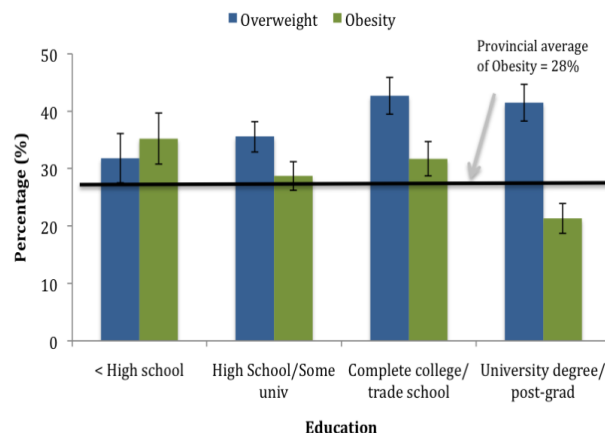


Figure 3. Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity by Education Level.

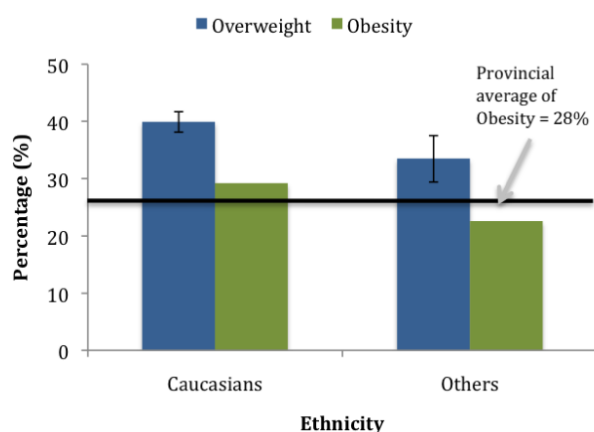


Figure 4. Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity by Ethnicity.

How Does Obesity Compare Across Different Ethnicities in Alberta?

- Obesity is more common among Caucasians (29%) than among non-Caucasians (23%) (Figure 4).

How Does Alberta Compare to the National Figures for Obesity?

- Across Canada increased prevalence of obesity has been reported in lower socio-economic status populations (Obesity in Canada: A joint report from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2011).

Data Source

We used data from the **Health Quality Council of Alberta's** 2012 Satisfaction and Experience with Health Care Services Survey, administered by the Population Research Laboratory (PRL) at the University of Alberta. The sample for this study comprised 4803 respondents, age 18 or older, interviewed by telephone during a 3-month period from February 24th to May 27th, 2012. www.hqca.ca