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## Obesity increasing in young adults

Young adults are gaining weight faster than any other age group according to a new article titled *The Health Consequences of Obesity in Young Adulthood*, published in *Current Obesity Reports*. This has a cost to their future health. Many of these young people are already overweight and the weight gain often starts in adolescence.

“Young people do not view health as a priority,” said Dr Hoi Lun Cheng, first author of this review and the Marie Bashir Research Fellow in Adolescent Health at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead and University of Sydney. “Social commitments, education and work come first.”

Weight gain at this life stage can mainly be attributed to lifestyle transition factors such as moving away from home and eating more takeaway food, binge eating and drinking, less physical activity and more screen activities such as television viewing, video gaming and computer use.

Young adults with obesity might already have physical morbidities which will continue and worsen throughout adulthood, such as high blood pressure, diabetes and polycystic ovarian syndrome. Young women with obesity face additional maternal and foetal risks during pregnancy such as pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes. Growing evidence also points to genetic programming of obesity and its associated diseases in children of parents who suffer from obesity.

“The health consequences of obesity are challenging to manage in young adults because symptoms may be minimal, they engage less with healthcare due to other life priorities, and their brain developmental stage makes it difficult for them to stick to therapy,” said Dr Cheng.

When it comes to weight loss, young people are mainly driven by body image rather than health concerns. They also crave immediate results, which means that they are more likely to go for fad quick fix diets, rather than weight loss programs which are scientifically proven but involve steady weight loss over time.

The current generation of young adults is experiencing much higher BMIs at an earlier age than seen in previous generations and this situation is likely to have enduring negative consequences on the physical and mental health of not only the individual, but also of future generations.

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