

Do Obese Persons Comprehend Their Personal Health Risks?

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Objectives: To test whether overweight and obese individuals believe they are at greater risk of obesity-related diseases and premature mortality. **Methods:** Telephone survey of 1139 US adults analyzed using linear and ordered logistic regressions. **Results:** Obese (overweight) adults forecast life expectancies 3.9 (2.4) years shorter than those of normal weight adults. Excess weight was associated with greater self-perceived risk of de-

veloping diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and stroke. All results were statistically significant. **Conclusions:** Overweight and obese adults recognize several personal health risks associated with obesity. Interventions focusing only on health risks of obesity may provide minimal new information and induce little new weight loss.

Key words: obesity, expectations, longevity, risk, survival

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