

# L'attività lavorativa come fattore di rischio per l'obesità... e il contrario

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## KEY WORDS

Obesity; jobs; accidents

## SUMMARY

**«Job as a risk factor for obesity... and the contrary».** **Background:** *Obesity constitutes a risk for several vascular, metabolic and neoplastic diseases. In industrialised countries, but more and more in developing countries too, the prevalence of obesity is increasing. Body Mass Index and circumference of the abdomen are the two simplest and most utilized methods of measuring the degree of obesity in an individual and of comparing selected groups with different ethnic, social, cultural and occupational features.* **Objectives:** *The main aim of this article is to initiate a discussion on the possible contribution that the Occupational Health Physician can make to solving the problem of obesity, which is becoming more and more alarming in social terms. The working conditions favouring an increase in body weight and the negative effects that obesity has on various types of work are reported.* **Methods and results:** *A critical review of the literature on obesity and overweight stresses that a low educational level, a low socio-economic status, lack of physical activity in leisure time and certain working conditions, together with the ready availability of food, are the main factors favouring increased prevalence of obesity. Certain jobs also contribute significantly to this problem. Automation and the use of machines/robots for very heavy work in industrialised countries have the "collateral effect" of favouring body weight increase due to low energy consumption. Jobs that are a source of stress, such as work on three rotating shifts, can cause metabolic disorders leading to an increased prevalence of obesity. Contrariwise, obesity renders the individual unfit for some jobs: in fact, an increased incidence of industrial accidents has been related to obesity.* **Conclusions:** *The occupational health physicians engaged in surveillance of workers' health conditions can make a positive contribution to alleviating this problem by focusing their activity on the primary prevention of obesity and advising workers on how to maintain the right weight; otherwise, obese workers should be referred to appropriate medical centres.*

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