

Capturing the relation between gender disparity in obesity rates and country-level gender equality

This study expands the current research on and understanding of gender equality by developing an analytical framework that uses available country-level data on gender equality and on the female-to-male ratio of body mass index to reveal a correlation between a country's rate of female obesity and its level of gender equality. The framework illustrated that lower rates of female obesity are linked to increased gender equality and vice versa. This correlation between female obesity rates and gender equality at the country level reveals an important dimension of gender discrimination that may have been previously overlooked. Essentially, the results demonstrate that until a certain level of gender equality is attained in a country, women will experience higher rates of obesity than men. Therefore the findings of this study have not only established a quantitative tool for measuring women's empowerment and gender equality but have also uncovered a source of obesity that can inform future strategies to reduce the global obesity problem.