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Obesity and overweight among Arab population in Middle East

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At the time that one third of the globe populations still suffers poverty and under-nutrition; two third are struggling against overindulge foods which lead to overweight and obesity, where these observable facts kill more people than malnourished and underweight population. Obesity and overweight are an important adaptable risk factor for many chronic diseases and are the fifth leading risk for global deaths. The World Health Organization predicts there will be 2.5 billion overweight adults in the world by 2017 and more than 750 million of them will be obese. Epidemiological studies of obesity in the Mediterranean basin were limited, particularly for Arab population. Nevertheless, the effects of overweight and obesity are widely documented as one of the recent leading Arab health challenges. Indeed, many efforts have been made to stress the role of cultural attitudes that may underlie the high prevalence of obesity among Arab population. Historically, bread is the main staple in the Arab's diet and consumed widely. Decades ago bread was homemade by whole-wheat flour, today the consumed bread is almost store-bought or commercially produced white-flour bread. Indeed, this is one of many examples that describes the transition from traditional diet to the modern lifestyle characterized by low fibers and high fat dietary patterns. In fact, Arab community has undergone major transitions in lifestyle – from agricultural to predominantly urban lifestyle. The transition was primarily influenced by changes in the modernization, westernization and socioeconomic status. Adopting less healthy dietary patterns, such as high carbohydrates, low fiber and high fat diet consumption, in addition to relinquishing the Mediterranean diet have been the main reasons of overweight and obesity among Arab population in Middle East.