

## Obesity and Mood Disorders

According to WebMD, obesity is associated with approximately 25% increase in odds of mood and anxiety disorders. I personally experienced this phenomenon with one of my colleagues many years ago. She was very depressed and overweight. We supported her when she decided to get gastric bypass surgery, and when she had the procedure done we noticed a big difference in her attitude and productivity in the office. Unfortunately, she gained a majority of the weight back a year or two later. In retrospect, I feel she may have benefited from consulting with a behavioral therapist to deal with her problem. Unfortunately, she left our area to work in another state and lost contact with her.

Emotional eating and altered mood can lead to overeating and obesity. The focus of this article is to provide an overview of the complexities on how food intake, mood and brain function can result in obesity and abnormal feeding behavior. The question is, does depression cause obesity, or does obesity prompt depression? In researching this topic, I have discovered that doctors are still trying to get to the bottom of both disorders to find out definitely what treatment can be effective for these conditions. One thing is that obesity can cause low self-esteem and social isolation, all known as contributors to depression.

A person can create his or she's own low self-esteem. Judging yourself harshly and telling yourself you are worthless can be very self-destructive. Stressful situations such as obesity, loss of a job, etc. can make it hard to feel good about yourself. How others treat you, as well as how you get along with others, can also affect your self-esteem. Obese individuals are treated differently in social gatherings. We live in a society where physical appearance determines job security, high wages, promotions at work and other social and economic opportunities. How many times have you seen on TV situations where children are bullied at school due to their appearance? This phenomenon is seen time and time again in our society,

Obesity is associated with adverse health outcomes and can result in feelings of loneliness or isolation as well as physical consequences, such as death, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, etc. People with social isolation issues must understand that physical activity is an essential component in dealing with the illness. The old adage "move it or lose it" is such a poignant cliché that has been around for years. Why? Because physical activity is essential for the mind and body. There are a variety of exercises that can help with weight loss and improve mental wellness. I know after a workout I feel invigorated and ready to go tackle the world. People who are overweight can also feel the same. The best exercises are those that a person can do comfortably, consistently and safely. Some people who are obese will have pain or difficulty breathing. Therefore, exercise could be very uncomfortable. They need to remember that "Rome wasn't built in a day"

"Obesity and Mood Disorders", "Ronald G Rossetti" MBA, Article # 30, Volume 2, Series # 2, International Alliance for Mental Health, (2022)