



The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Obesity (Oxford Handbooks)

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There is an urgent need to better understand the causes and consequences of obesity, and to learn what works to prevent or reduce obesity. This volume accurately and conveniently summarizes the findings and insights of obesity-related research from the full range of social sciences including anthropology, economics, government, psychology, and sociology. It is an excellent resource for researchers in these areas, both bringing them up to date on the relevant research in their own discipline and allowing them to quickly and easily understand the cutting-edge research being produced in other disciplines. *The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Obesity* is a critical reference for obesity researchers and is also valuable for public health officials, policymakers, nutritionists, and medical practitioners.

The first section of the book explains how each social science discipline models human behavior (in particular, diet and physical activity), and summarizes the major research literatures on obesity in that discipline. The second section provides important practical information for researchers, including a guide to publicly available social science data on obesity and an overview of the challenges to causal inference in obesity research. The third part of the book synthesizes social science research on specific causes and correlates of obesity, such as food advertising, food prices, and peers. The fourth section summarizes social science research on the consequences of obesity, such as lower wages, job absenteeism, and discrimination. The fifth and final section reviews the social science literature on obesity treatment and prevention, such as food taxes, school-based interventions, and medical treatments such as anti-obesity drugs and bariatric surgery.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Comprehensive and impressive... For those who want to master the last two decades of social science research on obesity by reading a single volume, [t]his handbook provides an accessible crash course."
--*Lancet*

"A good entry point to the literature on a vast array of subjects related to obesity." --*The Atlantic*

"Among health issues, the problems wrought by obesity are of prime concern to health professionals and to the subjects themselves.... This impressive collection of research papers with its massive bibliography will serve as the anchor for continued studies into the perplexing obesity dilemma. Highly recommended."
--*CHOICE*

"There are few topics more important to health policy than obesity, and this volume has many of the best thinkers on the topic. It is a major step forward in our understanding of eating, exercise, and weight." --David Cutler, Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics, Harvard University

"During the past three decades, the United States and most of the rest of the developed world have experienced a rapid and sustained rise in the obesity rate. This trend has stimulated an enormous amount of research by social scientists dealing with its causes and consequences and with policies to combat it. This fascinating volume contains detailed, comprehensive, and penetrating summaries of this body of research. It is certain to have a major impact in guiding new studies and in the formulation of new policies in this crucial area." --Michael Grossman, Distinguished Professor of Economics, City University of New York Graduate Center and Health Economics Program Director and Research Associate, National Bureau of Economic Research

"Need I state the obvious, that the obesity pandemic - associated with our opulence, social structure, and post-industrial lifestyle - is an insidious threat to our long run well-being? Even if policy makers remain complacent, nowhere is the prevalence rate as high as in the United States where amazingly practically two out of three adults are now either overweight or obese. This splendid collection of studies should help us formulate more effective ways to counter the epidemic and at the same time provide future researchers an effective starting point for expanding the frontiers of knowledge on the economic aspects of this complex problem. The editor and publisher should be commended for bringing together such an excellent collection on the current state of knowledge. Simply indispensable." --John Komlos, University of Munich, Founding Editor of *Economics and Human Biology*

"I think that the book achieves its objective of being a state-of-the-art summary of current thinking around research in the field and presents some interesting points, e.g. that research findings vary depending on geography, race and age... for anyone undertaking research or an MFOM project on obesity, it is an essential background read." --*Occupational Medicine*

About the Author

John Cawley is a professor in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management at Cornell University. His primary field of research is health economics, with a focus on the economic causes of obesity, the economic consequences of obesity, and economic approaches to obesity treatment and prevention. He has served on expert panels and advisory committees regarding obesity for the Institute of Medicine, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other government agencies. In addition to his affiliation with Cornell, John is a Research Associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research in the Programs on Health Economics and Health Care, and he is a co-editor of the journal *Economics & Human Biology*. More information about the editor is available at www.johncawley.com.

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George Pinard:

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