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Sp!ked Scores

[Sp!ked](#) is a British humanist/libertarian Internet magazine. They've published an article on the new study in the Lancet - the one that fails to support the theory that waist circumference and waist/hip ratio are more important than BMI for predicting risks (or indeed that any of those three pieces of information are useful when you know the numbers for blood pressure and cholesterol).

The article's called [How the War on Obesity went Pear-Shaped](#). Having a very nice pear shape myself, I'm not a fan of "pear shaped" being used as a synonym for "wrong." HOWEVER, this is an excellent article. Here are two of my favorite paragraphs, but its worth it to follow the link and read the whole thing.

Since the anti-obesity campaign is allegedly motivated by scientific findings, it would seem reasonable and prudent to make doubly sure that those claims are factual and trustworthy. Yet, we continue to find that the case against obesity is significantly flawed. Not only are the claims of an obesity epidemic often wildly exaggerated, but the science linking weight to unfavourable mortality outcomes is also frequently nonexistent or distorted.

Obesity crusaders' are what we call the individuals who manufactured the obesity-epidemic story in the first place and continue, through application of inherently flawed instruments, such as BMI and apple-body shapes, to misinform the public. They are a relatively small group of public-health officials in the US, the UK, the EU, and the World Health Organisation, assorted academics (very many with close ties to the weight-loss and pharmaceutical industry), the International Obesity Task Force, and a collection of so-called public-interest science groups.

The article has two authors: Patrick Basham, who directs the Democracy Institute and is a Cato Institute adjunct scholar, and John Luik is a Democracy Institute senior fellow. The fatosphere has a liberal bias (as do I). However, on this issue, the liberals are failing us and the libertarians are talking sense.

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Posted by [DeeLeigh](#) on March 19, 2011



[pani113](#)

March 19th, 2011 | [Link](#) | Actually, there are some

Actually, there are some sound studies indicating hip fat can be protective against diabetes. In one they injected hip fat into diabetic mice and their incidence of diabetes decreased. While I love the results of this new study, fair is fair. I read in another place it was a meta analysis. This means no new research, just applying statistical formulas to already existing research. They can be the weakest form of studies. Still, that IS what most evidence shows, that when diabetes and other risk factors are controlled for, obesity is NOT a good predictor of heart disease!

"Fat can be beautiful. Intolerance is ALWAYS ugly!"

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[DeeLeigh](#)

March 19th, 2011 | [Link](#) | Yes, I've read it and it is

Yes, I've read it and it *is* a meta analysis (a "datadredge"). Not exactly the gold standard in research methods, it must be said.

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[BigLiberty](#)

March 19th, 2011 | [Link](#) | Cato's got a great

Cato's got a great repository of articles which are aimed at exposing the 'obesity epidemic' as the sham it is. I had a [post up](#) on my blog about it the other day. I encourage anyone to [search Cato's archives for 'obesity'](#) and -- get this -- rarely will you need a singular Sanity Point. Seriously. What other think-tank can claim that?

For those interested in a more libertarian/anarchist viewpoint on the 'obesity epidemic,' I'd also check out Reason Mag at Reason.com. Again, [search their archives for 'obesity.'](#) More Sanity Points there -- not every article is 'with it' -- and like usual, don't read the comments. But not bad. Much more balanced than most liberal/conservative mags/blogs, in my experience.

Good to see that the libertarian viewpoint is coming through on the issue of fat. It's only logical, as I've endeavored to explain to any other libertarian within earshot (though I'm more of an anarcho-capitalist these days), to be skeptical of a push to categorize a whole group of humans as deviant and less-than, either in need of severe nannying (left) or severe finger-wagging (right) -- really, there's no practical difference.

I wonder what the best arguments are to convince the left and right that fat-shaming doesn't make sense in either paradigm? Leftists are coherent, at least: once they realize fat rights are a civil rights issue, they usually 'get it.' People on the right are a mish-mash, much harder to direct a single message to. The most rational believe in leaving people alone, and the least rational believe fat people are gluttonous sinners (sigh).

I also hope the fake-libertarian 'personal responsibility' fascists (who think you're a-okay only if you're exactly like them) read articles like this one and think long and hard about what they're actually saying. But that's probably unrealistic, since they lost those twenty pounds once and if they can do it, surely you can, too! ('nother sigh)

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