



## Obesity is worth celebrating

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A British medical journal published a finding last month that might be the most encouraging and inspiring bit of news in the history of mankind. And few people noticed. And the ones who did notice did so for all the wrong reasons.

The journal, The Lancet, claimed that obesity is now a bigger health crisis globally than hunger.

Think about that. Throughout human history, the biggest challenge for man has been eating enough calories to work productively, fight off disease and not starve to death. But now, thanks to the development of high-yield, disease-resistant crops, synthetic fertilizers and pesticides -- not to mention the increase of capitalism and free trade throughout the world -- there is more than enough food to feed all the people on Earth.

The ability to feed all of humanity is a very recent occurrence. Throughout man's 3 million years of existence (give or take a million, depending on how you define "man"), billions of people died because of malnutrition and other hunger-related causes. In just the last half-century, food production and distribution techniques have advanced so greatly that most instances of starvation in the world today are the result of failed government policies and distribution issues, not a lack of food.

In fact, according to the World Hunger Education Service, "world agriculture produces 17 percent more calories per person today than it did 30 years ago, despite a 70 percent population increase."

So how did the media respond to the medical journal's study that found malnutrition is becoming less of a health issue than obesity? Rather than celebrating the news, stories came from all corner of the globe with headlines like "In Africa, obesity is the new starvation," "Obesity: a time bomb to be defused" and "Obesity three times more deadly than malnutrition."

Even the federal government, through the taxpayer funded Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), claims that obesity has become an "epidemic."

If obesity is an "epidemic," it's too bad there aren't more epidemics like it. Obesity is largely the result of the human body's evolutionary hard-wiring to eat when there's food available -- that's the outcome of man being perpetually hungry for 3 million years. That availability of food has dramatically reduced childhood deaths from malnutrition and greatly increased longevity. Every year, people all across the world are living longer and healthier than ever before.

As a result, people are actually living long enough to die from things like heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

Hallelujah!

The news gets even better. It turns out the obesity epidemic has been outrageously exaggerated. A 2010 study by the CDC found that obesity rates were stable or declining. "For women, there were no statistically significant changes in obesity prevalence over the entire decade, while for men there were no prevalence differences during the last five years of the decade," a Cato Institute review of the study noted.

In an article for Worth magazine, author Radley Balko found that "the two diseases most linked to obesity -- heart disease and cancer -- are in rapid decline." The National Institutes of Health, after claiming that 400,000 Americans died each year from obesity reassessed its numbers and found that "the number of deaths attributable to obesity each year is closer to 100,000."

In reality, as the government's need to exaggerate the facts proves, obesity's dangers are relatively minor -- especially when compared to the millions of lives saved by cheap and easy access to food every year.

Rather than focusing on obesity, we should focus on the fact that people are being fed. For the first time in human history, more people are obese than hungry. And that is cause for every person in the world to celebrate.