Author's response to reviews

Title: The body politic: the relationship between stigma and obesity-associated disease.

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
March 19, 2008

Dear Dr. Graham,

Thanks much for the opportunity to further improve this manuscript. In your cover, you mentioned, “We appreciate that you have included more biological mechanisms in your work, and although this is acceptable as a correspondence piece we would like you to moderate your conclusions, and discuss the limitations of your manuscript.” The conclusion section of the document now almost only focuses on the limitations of the obesity-induced stigma hypothesis. The tone of the document as a whole has also been moderated. I hope that you find the revisions have made this a more tempered and objective paper. I have also responded to each of the reviewer comments below.

Thanks much for your time and consideration.

Best,

Peter Muennig
Reviewer: Angelo Tremblay

Reviewer's report:
The paper submitted by Dr. Muennig is a well written paper that comments on very interesting issues. This manuscript is also perceived as a courageous piece of work, as exemplified in the last paragraph of page 21 when the author indicates that public health officials might well have exacerbated the obesity-related problems. Despite this positive appreciation, this reviewer proposes several suggestions that could improve the content of the paper but that the author should consider as facultative.

1. Page 15, first paragraph: It would be relevant to cite the paper of Tremblay and Doucet (Obes. Rev. 1:27-35, 2000) who described some metabolic side effects resulting from body weight loss in obese individuals.

I've added this citation.

2. Page 20, last complete paragraph: The content of this paragraph seems to be concordant with the study of Chaput and Tremblay (Physiol. Behav. 90: 66-72, 2007) who showed that mental work, which is maybe a source of stress, increases ad libitum energy intake.

I have reviewed the paper, which I find very interesting. However, I didn’t find that it didn’t perfectly mesh with the message, which I’ve modified since the last revision.

3. Conclusion: This section is very long, probably too long. This reviewer suggests to transfer some elements of discussion in the main part of the paper. The conclusion will then be more focused on the summary of key points.

Response. Yet another excellent suggestion. I have greatly shortened the conclusion section of the paper, trimming well over half of the material that was there before. It now focuses almost entirely on the paper’s limitations.

Reviewer: George Chrousos

This is an unnecessarily long review manuscript claiming to provide a new theory on human morbidity and mortality risk factors, downgrading obesity and upgrading stress. I would like to see more science, more moderation and less triumphalism.

Response. I hope that the paper does not sound triumphant. I have greatly cut the conclusion section so that it now focuses almost exclusively on the limitations of the hypothesis I forward. I’ve also made cuts throughout the manuscript. Much of the length stems from the additional bench science I added on the last
revision. However, the cuts that I have made should put it into a more reasonable range. I have also greatly tempered the language throughout.