

Weight Stigma in Youth: Prevalence, Consequences, and Considerations for Clinical Practice

This review aims to summarise the evidence available on weight stigma experienced by youth living with overweight or obesity, which commonly presents through bullying. More specifically, the review aims to determine the prevalence of weight stigma in youth, as well as its sources. The review also aims to ascertain the effects of the experience of stigma in youth upon mental and physical health, and how weight stigma can be mitigated in clinical practice and pediatric care.

Results of the review included the finding that weight stigmatisation is extremely prevalent within youth, and that this stigmatisation stems from parents, teachers, and peers. Those individuals living with a higher body weight are more often subject to stigmatisation through the form of bullying.

The review also elucidated the fact that stigmatisation has a variety of adverse mental, physical, and social outcomes for youth, including: anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, weight gain, substance abuse, reduced physical activity, and decreased academic outcomes.

The review makes the recommendation that healthcare professionals must act as key players in reducing weight stigma in youth through non-stigmatising support with obesity.

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