



Men and the War on Obesity: A Sociological Study

Lee F. Monaghan

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Is obesity really a public health problem and what does the construction of obesity as a health problem mean for men?

According to official statistics, the majority of men in nations such as England and the USA are overweight or obese. Public health officials, researchers, governments and various agencies are alarmed and have issued dire warnings about a global 'obesity epidemic'. This perceived threat to public health seemingly legitimates declarations of war against what one US Surgeon General called 'the terror within'. Yet, little is known about weight-related issues among everyday men in this context of symbolic or communicated violence.

Men and the War on Obesity is an original, timely and controversial study. Using observations from a mixed-sex slimming club, interviews with men whom medicine might label overweight or obese and other sources, this study urges a rethink of weight or fat as a public health issue and sometimes private trouble. Recognizing the sociological wisdom that things are not as they seem, it challenges obesity warmongering and the many battles it mandates or incites. This important book could therefore help to change current thinking and practices not only in relation to men but also women and children who are defined as overweight, obese or too fat. It will be of interest to students and researchers of gender and the body within sociology, gender studies and cultural studies as well as public health researchers, policymakers and practitioners.

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