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Obese, but metabolically healthy

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A person can be obese and metabolically healthy at the same time, which means that this person will have the same mortality risk for heart disease or cancer that people of normal weight. This is the conclusion of a study published in the prestigious journal European Heart Journal.

"Obesity is associated with a large number of chronic diseases as heart diseases or cancer. However, there is a group of obese people that do not suffer the metabolic complications associated with obesity", the author of the study, Prof. Francisco B.Ortega, explains.

Prof. Ortega is currently working as a researcher and professor at the University of Granada Department of Physical Education, and at the Karolinska Institut Department of BioSciences and Nutrition in Sweden. Prof. Ortega conducted this study during his professional stay at the University of South Carolina (USA), in collaboration with Prof. Steven N. Blair, one of the most renowned researchers in the world in the field of physical activity, fitness and health. Prof. Blair is the coordinator of the Aerobics Center Longitudinal Study (ACLS), which includes more than 43,000 people followed-up either for 15 years or until their death,

Prof. Ortega et al. observed in their study that between 30-40% of obese patients were metabolically healthy. "We made two findings: firstly, metabolically-healthy obese people exhibited better cardiorespiratory fitness - or aerobic fitness-. Secondly, this subgroup has a lower mortality risk rate for heart disease or cancer than other obese people, and has the same mortality risk than people of normal weight."

"This study concludes that, regardless of body weight and fat, people with better aerobic fitness have a lower risk for heart or cancer disease and death", Dr. Ortega states.

"This finding means that a more accurate prognosis of the risk for heart or cancer disease in obese people can be achieved if health professionals assess the lipid profile, BMI and fitness of their obese patients.

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