

## **OBESOGENIC FACTORS: CULTURAL SELECTION AND CONSUMPTIONS BEHAVIORS**

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### **Abstract**

A condition of obesity is caused by an interaction of genetic and cultural or behavioral predispositions. Thus, both genes and culture are products of evolutionary processes, hence cultural selection acting on eating behaviors and perceptions. Now days scientific studies regarding obesogenic phenomena are due to health concerns rising in Western countries and Eastern European countries which in the last decades has had a cultural shift in food consumption and perceptions about what it is considered healthy. Heredity, changes in diet and cultural features, leisure time behaviors and the quality of physical activity are the main factors involved in overweight and obesity. Additionally, other factors involved in obesogenic phenomena are related to family, economic factors, the way of living, the kind of food preferred and nutritional beliefs regarding food consumption. The comparative analysis makes possible knowing the obesogenic factors that causes overweight and obesity in children and adolescents in Albania. There is considerably cross-cultural variation, even among different ethnicities living in the the same geographical area. Overweight and obesity are mostly related to consumption behavior. In a previous study taken in Albanian citizens from age 2 years old to 20 years old it has been shown that Albanians children and adolescents values regarding overweight and obesity are one of the highest in Europe ( Agolli 2013). Overweight and obesity are caused by food habits and cultural perceptions regarding health. Genetics play a significant role but mostly major cultural shifts in post communist countries are responsible for obesogenic phenomena. Consumption behaviors regarding food and health in Albania are the principal factors in obesogenic phenomena spreading in the post communism state. The highest values of overweight and obesity in Albanian children and adolescents are due to newly formed consumption behaviors.

**Keywords:** *obesogenic factors, consumption behaviors, cultural selection, overweight, obese, Albania*