Top Ten Things To Know
Mortality, Health Outcomes, and Body Mass Index (BMI) in the Overweight Range

1. This is a discussion and explanation of potential confounders and biases that could lead to the observation of a “U” or “J”-shaped relationship between BMI and mortality.

2. Being overweight increases the risk for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and more.

3. BMI – sometimes thought of as a reliable indicator of total body fat – is a simple height-weight ratio that doesn’t take muscle mass into account.

4. BMI may overestimate body fat in some individuals such as athletes and others who have a muscular build.

5. Individuals at a similar BMI may have a different distribution of lean to fat mass, resulting in a misclassification of health risk due to the BMI score.

6. Most studies have shown increased medical risk for overweight as classified by BMI = 25-30; however, a few studies show overweight adults as a group whose mortality risks are unexpectedly lower than those associated with the other weight categories.

7. There is always a point where increasing BMI is associated with increasing mortality risk, but the BMI at which this occurs varies across studies and populations.

8. Some have interpreted recent scientific data to mean that “overweight” is not detrimental to health and not in itself a public health concern, and that drawing attention to the need for weight loss in the overweight range BMI = 25 to 30, will have negative effects on the health and well-being of the general population.

9. In the long term, because weight gain is progressive and weight loss is difficult to maintain, it is critical that weight maintenance and obesity prevention approaches are implemented for all overweight individuals.

10. Both healthy eating patterns and physical activity have roles in managing weight and in managing CVD risk, and should be encouraged.

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