

Prevalence of common chronic diseases among overweight and obese adults in Greece

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Introduction and Objectives

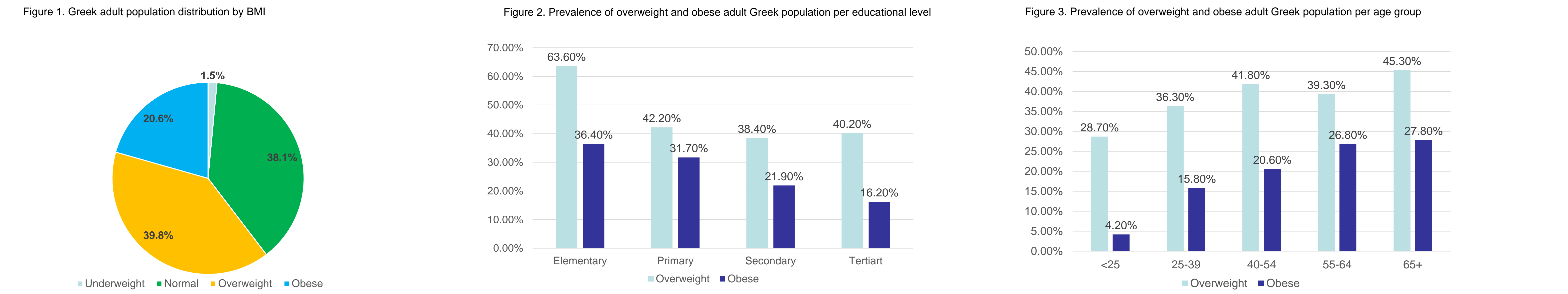
Overweight and obesity are considered significant public health challenges for the 21st century and are recognized as major risk factors for various non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and certain cancers. The aim of this study was: a) to estimate the prevalence of overweight and obesity in the Greek adult population by using the body mass index (BMI) and b) to estimate the prevalence of common chronic diseases in the same population.

Methods

Primary data were extracted from the health interview survey 'Health and Welfare', which was conducted by the Greek National School of Public Health, and refer to 2017. The sample of the analysis consisted by 2003 adults aged 18 years or older, representative of the country's population and stratified by age, gender, geographical region and degree of urbanization. The stratification of the population was based on the administrative divisions of the country in the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS). BMI was based on self-reported height and weight. The chronic conditions, which were included in the analysis, were heart attack/myocardial infarction, angina or coronary heart disease, asthma, cancer, COPD or emphysema or chronic bronchitis, arthritis or lupus or fibromyalgia, depression diabetes and kidney disease, and were also based on self-report.

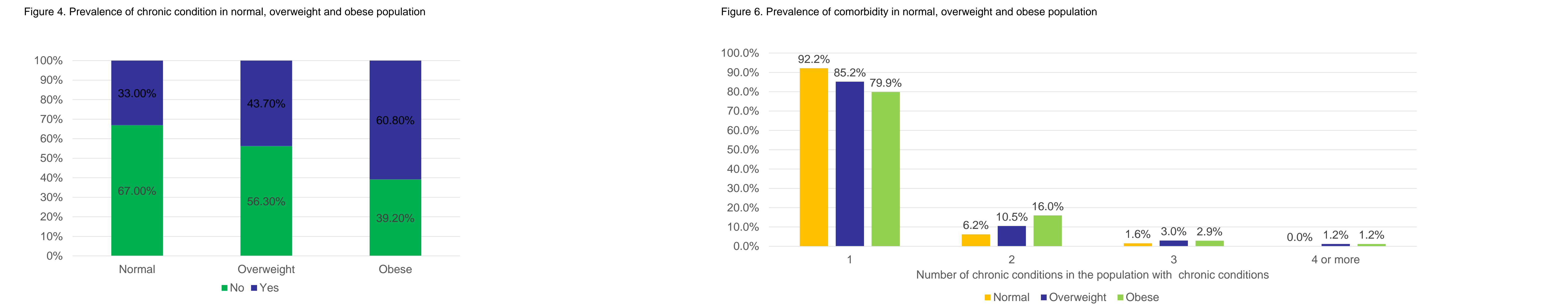
Results

The Greek adult population that reported overweight or obese in 2017, was 39.8% and 20.6% respectively (Figure 1). It is observed that the higher educational level is linked with lower prevalence of overweight and obesity (Figure 2). Moreover, the prevalence of overweight and obesity is higher among older age groups (Figure 3).



43.7 % of the overweight and 60.8% of the obese population had a suffered by a self-reported diagnosed chronic condition (Figure 4). Among the obese population, the prevalence of chronic condition amounted 20.7% for diabetes, 16.3% for arthritis or lupus or fibromyalgia, 12.0% for a history of heart attack, 10.8% for coronary heart disease or angina and 9.2% for depression. The prevalence of the aforementioned chronic conditions was lower for the overweight population, compared to the obese one, and significantly lower for the population with normal weight (Figure 5).

In addition, comorbidity was reported by 14.8% of the obese and 20.1% of the overweight adult population with a chronic condition. More specifically, 85.2% of the overweight population suffered from 1 chronic condition, while the percentage for obese accounted 79.9%. Moreover, 10.5% of the overweight and 16.0% of the obese population, suffered from 2 chronic conditions. The population with 3 chronic conditions amounted 3.0% of the overweight and 2.9% of the obese population. Lastly, 1.2% of both the overweight and the obese population suffered from 4 chronic conditions or more (Figure 6).



Conclusions

The high prevalence of overweight and obesity in Greece, can lead to poor health outcomes, as well as to increasing pressure to the health system. The development of a national action plan with multisectoral approach is required in order to reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity, as well as for the alleviation of chronic disease morbidity.

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