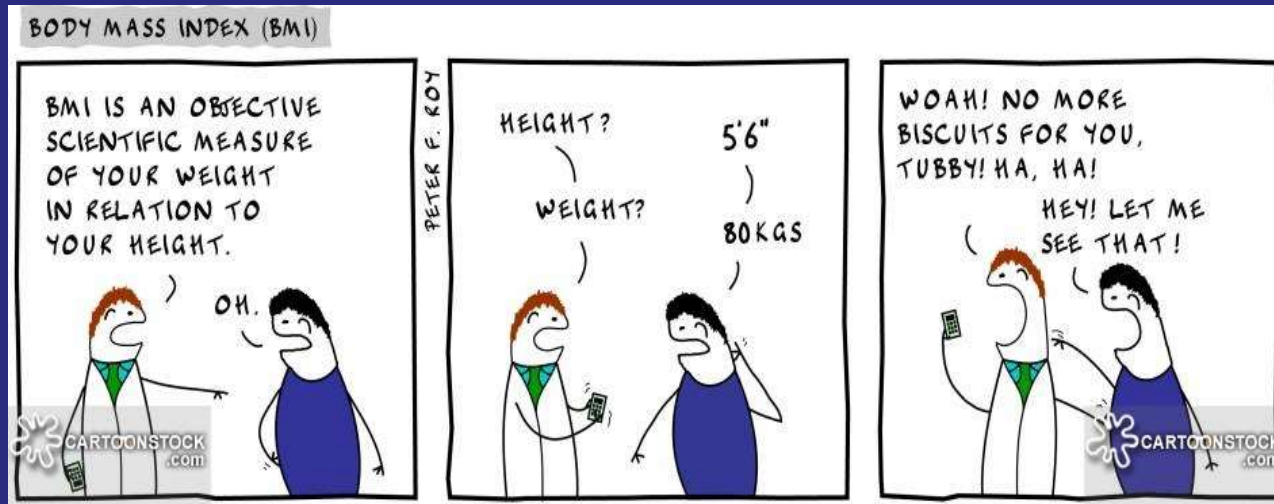


Carrying Too Much Weight: *Obesity – how do we talk about it?*



Dr Rose Black, Kerri Huaki and Teresa Binoka
Inspiring Change - Activity & Nutrition Aotearoa Conference
31 May 2017

Public Health Advisory and Development Team
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What we say and how we say it matters (McCreanor, 2005)

Sticks and stones will break
your bones but names will
never hurt you

*Actions speak louder
than words*

He tao rākau, e
taea te karo; he tao
kōrero, e kore e
taea te karo

He aha te kai o te Rangatira
– he korero, he korero

Talking about talk

Language is a form of social practice

“Discourses structure people’s ways of thinking and knowing about the social world”

(Powell & Fitzpatrick, 2016, p.467)

What we say and how we say it has social, political, cultural and material effects

Consider the following headline:

“Māori slow to use virtual health app”

(Waikato Times, 2 May 2017, p.3, Aaron Leaman)

A headline that reflected the content of the article might read:

“DHB SmartHealth initiative struggling to reach Māori”



New Study into Māori obesity (2008)

Government must fix Māori obesity (2015)

Intervention vital to curb Māori obesity (2015)



TheFlightlessMallard
@thequacklife

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No depictions in Maori, Samoan or Polynesian lore have Maui look anything like the stereotype in Disney's [#Moana](#). Very disappointing.

Headliners

Pacific Islands 'worst in world for obesity'

(NZ Herald, 2007)

USA & NZ food imports contribute to higher Pacific obesity rates



1-in-10 Pacific Island kids in NZ 'extremely obese'

(Stuff, 2007)

Extreme obesity more common for low socio-economic status children



Gene linked to obesity found in half of Samoans

(Stuff, Newshub, RNZ, 2016)

Gene linked to Diabetes protection found in Samoan Peoples

Talking about Pākehā privilege

It is good for Pākehā to know who we are,
But it is also good that we know **HOW** we are,
And **HOW POWERFULLY** we are what we are

(Ven Dr Hone Kaa)

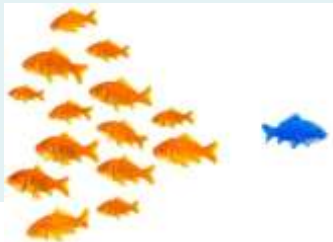


There are no themes in the news about Pākehā as a group
because Pākehā are portrayed as if they are the nation.

They are shown as the norm or default
– the natural, ordinary community against which all other ethnic groups are measured.

As a result the media hardly ever refer to or identify Pākehā by ethnicity

(Kupu Taea: Media and te Tiriti Project, 2014)



Health and wellbeing and the obesity conundrum

Beliefs, Viewpoints, Literature, Messaging

Indigenous – Māori - Pacific

Colonial context

Changing diets

Pacific peoples collective focus

Cultural

Food is central in all cultures for everyday and special events

Thinness culture, focus on weight

Public health

“Obesity is a normal human response to the increasingly obesogenic food environment”

(Toi Te Ora, 2015, p.30)

Social inequalities

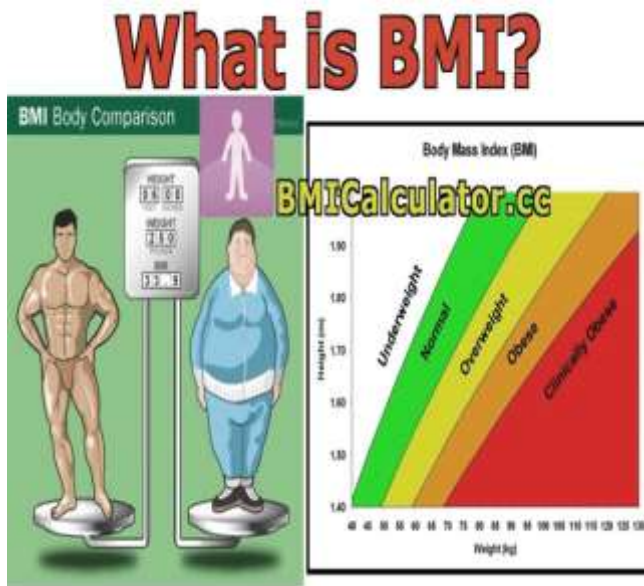
Medical/Professional/Academic

Treating the condition

Weight loss only “ethical” position for overweight /obese

BMI Language

- is used as an uncritical **shortcut for complex conditions** like obesity
 - is used to **stereotype and stigmatise** Maori and Pacific peoples
 - **ignores** cultural and socioeconomic **contexts**



People and Wellbeing centred

Consider the way we language/talk about research and health messages

“... at times health messages convey a single finding, with an attention-grabbing heading, yet fail to discuss the ‘finding’ in any depth”

(Burrows, 2015, p.42)

“We have to develop a more compassionate response to people with obesity”

(Dr Robyn Toomath, 2015)

Health at Every Size (HAES) Compassion-centred approach that encourages body acceptance and self-care

(Bacon & Aphramor, 2011)

Using **everyday** language

Being **prescriptive**

Being conscious of **tone**

Taking **moral high ground**

“Adopting an ontology [*shared understanding*] of connectedness
may represent a more culturally centred approach
and help build epistemological [*knowledge*] resilience
to mitigate rising obesity incidence in indigenous populations”

(Bell, Smith, Hale, Kira, Tumilty, 2017, p.1)

**Tena koutou, tena koutou,
kia ora mai koutou katoa.**



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