The Impact

It was the aim to understand more about the complex relationship between obesity and cancer and look at whether the way people gain weight has a real impact on their risk of developing the disease. It is already known that having a high BMI increases the likelihood of developing some types of cancer but this research explores weight across an individual’s lifetime, allowing more detailed analysis on the different ways that extra weight can affect the development of cancer.

This study showed those rapidly putting on weight are at increased risk of developing certain cancers and these results give further emphasis to the importance of public health initiatives to help and encourage everyone to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The World Health Organization (WHO) state that being overweight and obesity are the most important known avoidable causes of cancer after tobacco.

Dr Hannah Lennon, lead author and researcher at The University of Manchester, said: “This research shows how important it is to look at weight gain over a person’s lifetime – to give a clearer picture of cancer risk through life, compared to assessing someone’s BMI at a single point.

“This study could also be really useful in public health. It could help identify people who would benefit the most from taking action to control their weight before any health problems arise – including a cancer diagnosis.”

The project gathered interest in the press and was picked up by the Independent, the Daily Express, the Daily Telegraph, and the Daily Mail, plus many more online publications in France, Germany, Australia, Thailand and China, to name a few.

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