



Commentary

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Commentary: “Lite” Reading from the Calorie Control Council

The Calorie Control Council (the “Council”) is an international association representing the low-calorie and reduced-fat food and beverage industry. Companies that make and use low-calorie sweeteners are among the Council’s members. Now, more than ever consumers are seeking diet and health information from credible and reliable sources. The Calorie Control Council serves as a reliable health information resource with experts available to assist with questions and concerns from consumers, health professionals, and the media.

Please use the Council as a resource when looking for information on low calorie and “lite” ingredients and the products that contain them. For more information, visit the Council’s website at www.caloriecontrol.org.

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The Obesity Epidemic: A Fresh Approach to a Complex Problem

Solving the obesity crisis is not going to be easy. In a world of sound bites and Twitter feeds, the obesity epidemic strikes at one of America's greatest vulnerabilities – the temptation to think everything can be done quickly (including taking the weight off). However, it took years to get to this point; it will take time to take it off.

Secondly, it's important to remember that there are many contributing factors when it comes to weight gain including sedentary jobs, more TV time, the time spent driving in cars, the food that is consumed, video games, fewer family mealtimes, etc. The good news is change is possible. And small changes can add up to big changes, and big changes can turn the tide. In this issue of *Commentary*, the Council examines some of the latest research on obesity, including studies that made headlines, and others that were not highlighted by the media.

Fiddling While America Bloats: Sensationalism in the Media

Yet for all of this complex, interrelated data, there are still those who claim that obesity is a simple fix. Here's an example: in June, researchers from the University of Texas – San Antonio gave an oral presentation at the American Diabetes Association meeting which claimed to find an association between diet soft drink consumption and an increase in waistlines. This 15-minute oral presentation – not yet published or peer reviewed – was picked up by dozens of major media outlets.

There were numerous flaws with the study, the most serious being that the study by design could not prove cause and effect. Thus, finding an association between waist circumference and diet soda consumption does not reveal much.

Additionally, the study was conducted in an aging population of 60- and 70-year olds. Unfortunately, such headlines may actually be doing people a disservice. Instead of focusing on the myriad of things that can be done to lose weight, this study may delude people into thinking that the cause of their weight problems is the result of one food or beverage.

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Where Do We Go from Here?

While causes of the obesity epidemic may not be simple, health professionals agree that the most sensible approach to weight loss is a balanced diet – eating a variety of foods, all in moderation – combined with exercise.

Weight is determined by the number of calories a person consumes and the number of calories used as energy. Consume more calories than burned, and the result is weight gain. Eating less and becoming more active, can result in weight loss. Most health professionals also recommend a slow weight loss process as the safest and most effective approach. Losing about one-half to one pound a week promotes long-term loss of body fat. But most importantly, it's sustainable. Short term changes do not result in lasting weight loss. But people can successfully manage their weight by making lifetime commitments to permanent changes in their eating habits.

Hope Ahead!

America On the Move, a nonprofit organization founded by Drs. James Hill and John Peters, has a mission “to improve health and quality of life by promoting healthful eating and active living among individuals, communities and society.” And they make some extremely valuable points: “It’s not as hard as you think. Research shows that small, specific changes in food and physical activity behaviors have positive effects on health and effectively stop weight gain. Start by making incremental changes that you can stick with for the long term. Soon, you’ll discover how small, simple lifestyle changes can make a big difference in the way you look and feel.”

Trends and Statistics

One Size Doesn't Fit All:

When it Comes to Weight Control, Men and Women are Different

According to the latest national consumer survey conducted by the Calorie Control Council, men and women are very different in terms of their weight control habits and the obstacles they face in maintaining healthy weight.

Currently, 54 percent of adult Americans are trying to reduce their weight, according to the survey. But different methods work for different people. Women are 13 percent more likely to report that they eat smaller portions than men, and 24 percent are more likely to count calories. Men, on the other hand, are more than twice as likely as women to say they use online weight loss tools. (Both men and women report exercise as their number one method for controlling weight.)

Likewise, the sexes report different reasons for being unsuccessful at losing weight. Women are more likely to say they don't exercise enough, their metabolism is slowing down, they don't have enough self-discipline or they eat for emotional reasons. Men are more likely to say they overeat at mealtimes.

Men are also more likely to say they exercise at least an hour every day, whereas women are more likely to report that they eat breakfast every day.

The key is to find strategies that work for you. The Calorie Control Council website, www.caloriecontrol.org, has a healthy weight toolkit, recipes for a healthy lifestyle, and other great resources to help women and men find ideas they can implement right away to start winning their battle with weight control.

“Low-Calorie Products Usage and Weight Control Habits Survey,” conducted by Booth Research Services, Inc. for the Calorie Control Council, November-December 2010.

Experts Weigh In

New Self Studies and Recorded Webinars Available for Nutrition Professionals

The Calorie Control Council is now a Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) accredited continuing professional education (CPE) provider. This means dietitians and dietetic technicians can now receive CPEs by viewing the recorded webinars and self-studies available at www.caloriecontrol.org.

Self Studies and Recorded Webinar Modules include:

Demystifying FDA's Food Ingredient Approval Process

Dietitians and other health professionals hear questions every day about whether the foods in grocery stores or restaurants are healthy and safe. Processed foods, complex ingredient names, low-calorie sweeteners, and preservatives, are just a few examples of ingredient-related questions asked by consumers. This module provides an in-depth exploration of the regulations for food additives.

Stevia: The Journey from GRAS to Grocery

Dr. Claire Kruger, Dr. Mike Carakostas and Hope Warshaw, RD, discuss the history of stevia, the safety assessment and how this ingredient is now being used in foods and beverages. The most up to date and scientifically accurate information is provided, and participants will acquire a more in-depth knowledge of the stevia plant, its components and the testing and science behind this new ingredient.

From Bench to Broadcast, Putting Research Into Perspective

Featuring nationally recognized experts Dr. Adam Drewnowski and Hope Warshaw, RD, this webinar tackles the issue of putting the often-confusing research studies that are published each year into context.

Dr. Drewnowski, Director of the University of Washington Center for Obesity Research, discusses the major differences between epidemiological and intervention studies and how each should be used in developing public health recommendations on weight control.

Ms. Warshaw pinpoints recent media highlights related to weight control and shows how they can spin out of control, often due to data misinterpretation. As opposed to motivating the public, the headlines leave many consumers questioning the "right" dietary habits. Ms. Warshaw provides examples of how health professionals can better evaluate new and emerging studies and put them into proper context while communicating meaningful, science-based messages.

The webinars are free and each provides one Continue Professional Education unit for dietitians. To take the self-study, or learn more, click here: [CPE Corner | The Calorie Control Council](#)



Sweet Substitutes

Stevia Gaining Approval in Europe

The Standing Committee of the European Commission (Directorate-General Health and Consumers Protection) voted to approve stevia extracts (steviol glycosides) for use in the European Union (EU) at its meeting held in July. Steviol glycosides are the sweet components isolated and purified from stevia leaves.

The next step in the regulatory process for stevia extracts is scrutiny of the proposed regulations by the European Parliament. If these next steps progress well, then it is likely that the natural low-calorie sweetener would be allowed to be used as an ingredient in the EU by November 2011.

For more information about stevia/steviol glycosides visit: <http://www.steviabenefits.org>.

Australia-New Zealand Approve Advantame

Advantame, an innovative sweetener that combines aspartame with vanillin, an ingredient in vanilla, has received approval in Australia and New Zealand for use in foods and beverages.

Advantame's approval allows for its use in a wide variety of products.

Due to the intense sweetness of Advantame, minimal amounts are needed to sweeten foods.



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