

cians need: practical, useful, and simple advice about how to tactfully and successfully discuss and recommend healthful nutritional habits.

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Hazardous Waist: Tackling Male Weight Problems, Alan White and Maggie Pettifer, Oxford (England), New York, Radcliffe Publishing, 2007, 229 pp., \$49.95, paperback.

Hazardous Waist: Tackling Male Weight Problems is a timely and groundbreaking document that bridges the gap between public health and medical approaches toward addressing the worldwide epidemic of male obesity. The book is a compilation of original presentations from the Men's Health Forum's *National Men's Health Week* held in London in 2005 that focused on male obesity, with several additional chapters that provide a broader perspective on public health issues and practical application. The book's admitted goal is to "increase understanding of the magnitude of male weight problems and their consequences to health and well-being, to raise awareness of the need to develop policy and practice that includes men and boys, and to develop and disseminate good practice in tackling weight problems in men and boys."

Before the reader delves into this text, certain tenets are taken for granted:

- Obesity is a major contributing factor of adverse health outcomes in men.

- The problem of obesity has significantly increased in magnitude over the past decade on a worldwide scale.

- We make the assumption that the obesity problem will continue to escalate worldwide, affecting more children, adolescents, and adults, resulting in a direct causal

link to increased morbidity, mortality, and health care expenditure, a significant proportion of which is preventable.

- Health care providers lack adequate tools and resources necessary to make a positive impact on their obese male patients to minimize the obesity epidemic.

Yet, the most salient premise of the book lies on page 17 in bold print: "**The problem is for men to recognize the problem!**" As Professor Michael Kimmel comments in the foreword, "Men need to develop a healthy relationship with their bodies—recognizing what they can and cannot do—and both accept their limitations and resist lethargic surrender."

The first six chapters deftly lay the groundwork for addressing "the challenge of male weight problems" by detailing pertinent research from a public health perspective. A sociologic approach is used to explore men and their relationship to body image, the media, and masculinity stereotypes. The authors of these introductory chapters strike a gentle balance between outlining pertinent medical studies discussing insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome as well as the need to properly determine abdominal hip-to-waist ratios as outcome measures, with the reality of heavily socially laden stereotypes of male body image and the complex social construct of masculinity.

The nucleus of the text is the chapter titled "Managing Male Obesity in Primary Care." This is why I bought the book! Excellent Web site references are provided to give an educational foundation for students, health care providers, and patients. The book delivers step-by-step guidelines on how to work with men in groups, in the workplace, through the Internet, via community clinic and pharmacy venues, and in special populations of men, including addressing ethnic and age variation, life-cycle

stage, and those with disabilities. Significant attention is given to how men perceive their bodies and contrasts it with female stereotypes and how such insight into research on obesity differs. The dilemma of how men approach, or more typically don't approach, adequate and appropriate preventive health care and the experiences of several community groups who have outlined strategic weight loss programs for men are also addressed.

Professor White is a world-renowned expert and professor of men's health, the author of countless publications and policy papers relating to men's health and help-seeking behavior, including the *Report on the State of Men's Health Across 17 European Countries*, and the lead author of *Men's Health—How to Do It*, a guide on developing dedicated men's health clinics. The contributors to this book all hail from England and Scotland, with backgrounds highlighting expertise in nutrition, fitness, public health, sociology, and public policy.

In summary, *Hazardous Waist* is an extremely well-conceived and well-referenced text with universal application for medical students, health care practitioners, nutritionists, and patients alike. The fact that it is based solely on data derived from British and Western European studies should in no way minimize the power of its statement on a global level. It is a vivid, eye-opening look into a public health problem that will continue to grow at an alarming rate—unless we use the insight and tools this book provides for us, continue to aggressively conduct pertinent research, challenge current health care policies worldwide, and translate our knowledge and skills into motivating our male patients to lose weight and save their lives.

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