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A fifth of the world's population will be obese by 2025 as one in nine go hungry

01/04/2016



Over the 40-year period between 1975 and 2014, the number of men and women in the world classified as obese soared from 105 million to 641 million, research by Imperial College London showed.

Thailand's Buddhist monks put on diet amid 'obesity time bomb'

The average person also became 3.3lb heavier with each passing decade. Were this trend to continue, 18 per cent of men and 21 per cent of women would be obese by 2025, according to the analysis, published in *The Lancet* medical journal. More than 6 per cent of men and 9 per cent of women would be severely obese, putting their health at risk, the study found. "Over the past 40 years, we have changed from a world in which underweight prevalence was more than double that of obesity – to one in which more people are obese than underweight," said Majid Ezzati from Imperial College, who led the research.

He said that to avoid "an epidemic of severe obesity", new policies "that can slow down and stop the worldwide increase in body weight must be implemented quickly and rigorously evaluated, including smart food policies and

improved healthcare training”.



#### Cutting benefits to help people lose weight 'would not work'

Despite the trend, excessively low body weight remained a serious public health issue in the world's poorest regions, the study's authors pointed out. Writing in the journal, George Davey Smith, from the School of Social and Community Medicine at the University of Bristol, stressed the importance of not letting obesity divert attention away from poor nutrition. “A focus on obesity at the expense of recognition of the substantial remaining burden of under-nutrition threatens to divert resources away from disorders that affect the poor, to those that are more likely to affect the wealthier in low-income countries,” he warned.

Neena Modi, president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, said: “These results are a stark reminder to government of the work that still must be done to combat obesity. This is an international problem, and worldwide joined-up thinking is needed to make progress.

“The UK can be a world leader in tackling obesity and the Government’s upcoming childhood obesity strategy provides a good opportunity to be that leader. The recent announcement of a sugar tax is a welcome start. ”