Are individuals responsible for their own obesity?

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

Chronic diseases, their origins, and issues of responsibility are a prevalent topic in current health care ethics and public discussion; and obesity is among one of the most discussed themes. Usually the public discussion has a tendency to assume that when information about health lifestyle choices exist, the individual should be able to make those choices. However, studies increasingly pay attention to the concept of food environment and its huge influence. If obesity really is that serious an issue to public health, health care costs, and economy as many suggest, focus should be directed to the alteration of food environment instead of having the individual as the primary target of intervention.

Traditionally, public health professionals give information about healthy food, citizens are encouraged to change their lifestyle, and the media is full of advice for losing weight. However, the measures directed to individuals have had little effectivity. In some countries, the "pandemic of obesity" have stopped, but nowhere has there been a clear decrease in obesity levels.

Researchers have paid increasing attention to how much people can reasonably control their eating in a genuinely conscious manner. The process of eating contains a lot of routine-like automatizations – if all the choices and decisions related to eating were always conscious, it would be a great burden to cognitive capacities. A key in the ability to be creative and efficient is that we automatize daily routines. Due to this automatization, external cues and the plenty impulses in the food environment easily affect our eating habits.

Read full, original post: [The food environment, obesity, and primary targets of intervention](#)