



In new efforts by The Obesity Society to address concerns about weight bias in the scientific community, it is recommended that authors adhere to the following guidelines in an attempt to avoid pejorative language and images in their submissions to *Obesity*, in poster or paper presentations submitted for consideration at The Obesity Society's Annual Scientific Meeting, in Annual Scientific Meeting education sessions, in Obesity Online content, and in any CME or other education programs that the Society conducts.

- 1) Authors should consider carefully whether terminology and language used could be offensive to persons with obesity.
- 2) Authors should avoid using potentially pejorative adjectives or adverbs when describing individuals who are overweight or obese, as well as language which implies moral judgments or character flaws to this population. This includes language which could be interpreted as stereotyping, biased, or prejudiced.
- 3) Where possible, when describing patients, research participants, and subjects who are overweight and obese, please consider using descriptive terms in a sensitive manner. Examples include referring to obesity or body weight scientifically with Body Mass Index (BMI) descriptors, and using terms like "excess weight" rather than "weight problem," "fatness," "morbidly obese," or other similar descriptors. The term "obesity" is appropriate when used for scientific publications but may be viewed as pejorative in articles written for the lay public. For more information on sensitive terminology to describe obesity, please consult the following reference:

Wadden TA, Didie E. What's in a name? Patients' preferred terms for describing obesity. *Obesity Research*. 2003;11;1140-1146.

- 4) In preparation of paper or poster research presentations, authors should avoid using images which may be potentially pejorative, biased, or prejudiced. This includes images that depict overweight or obese individuals as objects of humor, engaging in stereotypical behaviors (such as overeating, eating "junk food," or being sedentary), or imply other negative attributes (such as noncompliance with treatment, lack of willpower, laziness, or lack of commitment to health). Authors are encouraged to instead use images of individuals engaging in healthy behaviors (such as eating healthy foods or engaging in physical activity) or other behaviors which challenge and counter common stereotypes about weight.

For additional information on weight bias, please consult the following references:

Puhl R, Brownell KD. Bias, discrimination, and obesity. *Obesity Research*. 2001;9:788-805.

Schwartz MB, O'Neal H, Brownell KD, Blair S, Billington C. Weight bias among health professionals specializing in obesity. *Obesity Research*. 2003;11:1033-1039.