

Summary

The 2012 Swiss Health Survey (SHS), the fifth in a series of comparable surveys, was conducted on a representative sample of 21,597 adults (aged 15 or more) resident in Switzerland. The most important results can be summarized as follows: overweight (30.8%) and obesity (10.3%) are widespread. Having stagnated between 2002 and 2007, obesity is once again increasing. Risk groups for excess body weight are men, older people, those with a lower educational level, those with a low income, German-speaking Swiss, those living in rural areas, non-Swiss nationals, former smokers, and those who do not comply with the recommendations on exercise and on the consumption of fruit and meat. Risk groups for underweight are women, young people, those with a lower educational level, Italian-speaking Swiss and those who pay no attention to diet. Body weight is influenced not only by sociodemographic and lifestyle factors but also by attitudes to body weight. Altogether, 24.5% of the respondents (27.7% of women, 20.0% of men) are completely or somewhat dissatisfied with their body weight. In the 2012 SHS, the respondents are more satisfied with their body weight than in previous surveys. Altogether, 49.9% of the respondents (48.7% of men, 51.1% of women) wish to alter their body weight, with 80% of this group wishing to lose weight. A change in body weight is desired by 35.3% of those with normal body weight, 30.3% of the underweight, 67.8% of the overweight and 84.5% of the obese. Among the 8.9% of respondents who had followed a special diet in the 12 months before the survey, 50.3% did so to lose weight (i.e. for non-medical reasons). Of this group, 39.2% were of normal weight, 41.4% overweight and 18.8% obese. In summary, there is a need for preventive but also therapeutic action with regard to excess and insufficient body weight.