

**O 32. AN EVOLUTIONARY FRAMEWORK ON MALADAPTIVE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOURS**

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**ABSTRACT:** Obesity is caused by the interaction between genetic and cultural or behavioural predispositions. Thus, both genes and culture are products of evolutionary processes, hence cultural selection acts on eating behaviours and perceptions. Nowadays, more and more scientific studies are being conducted on obesogenic phenomena owing to health concerns arising in western countries and eastern European countries, which, in recent decades, have experienced a cultural shift in food consumption and perceptions about what it is considered healthy. Heredity, changes in diet, leisure-time behaviours, and the quality of physical activity are the main factors involved in overweight and obesity. Additionally, other factors involved in obesogenic phenomena are related to family, economic factors, lifestyle, preferred foods, and nutritional beliefs regarding food consumption. Considerable cross-cultural variation exists – even among different ethnicities living in the same geographical area – and cultural selection is the principal cause. One previous study conducted on Albanian citizens aged 2 to 20 years revealed the numbers of overweight and obese Albanian children and adolescents to be among the highest in Europe. Overweight and obesity are caused by food habits and cultural perceptions regarding health. While genetics plays a significant role, it is mostly major cultural changes in post-communist countries that are responsible for obesogenic phenomena. Consumption behaviours regarding food and health in Albania are the principal factors involved in the spread of obesogenic phenomena across the post-communist states.

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