

Obesity and Academic Performance in Adolescents**Rashmi and Sushma Jaswal****Department of Human Development, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana 141 001,
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ABSTRACT The present sample of adolescents (n: 160; 13 to 16 years in age) was drawn from ten schools located in the city of Ludhiana, Punjab. Height (cm) and weight (kg) of each selected subject were measured and Body Mass Index was calculated for each one. On the basis of BMI for age and sex, the subjects were classified into normal-weight and obese categories. The obese and the normal-weight samples were equally distributed over the two sexes. It was ascertained that all selected adolescents belonged to middle and upper-middle socio-economic strata. A significant negative correlation was found between BMI and academic performance of girls and boys. Normal-weight status adolescent boys and girls showed better academic performance than their obese counterparts. Normal-weight boys' academic performance was significantly lower than normal-weight girls. On the other hand, obese girls' and boys' performance was at par with each other and significantly lower than their normal-weight counterparts. The gap between obese and normal-weight girls' academic performance was much wider than what was found between obese and normal-weight boys, thus girls' weight status had a stronger association with academic performance as compared to boys. It may be that there is no causal link between body weight and academic performance, but rather an association that is explained by unobserved individual-level characteristics. It calls for targeting obesity-reduction measures to adolescents that may not only improve their health outcomes, but may also have a positive impact on human capital accumulation.