

TURKISH PEOPLE ONE SIZE LARGER THAN FOUR YEARS AGO AS OBESITY CASES INCREASE

Turks join heavyweight division

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The average weight of the population in the past four years climbed by three kilograms, roughly one dress size, a study conducted by the Turkish Association of Hypertension and Kidney Disease has shown. The results of the study, titled "Hypertension Incidence in Turkey," were disclosed yesterday at a conference on hypertension and kidney disease held in Antalya. According to the study, the average body mass index (BMI) of the nation increased by one unit in four years, with the average Turkish person gaining three kilograms in that period. The BMI is a statistical measure of the weight of a person scaled according to height, mainly

used only as a population measure and rarely used as a measure of diagnosis for individuals. The association interviewed 5,000 individuals above 22 years of age across 26 provinces of Turkey in 2003 and four years later in 2007. On average, the weight of the participants rose by three kilograms, while the average blood pressure rate increased by 21.3 percent during the same period.

Turkey Association of Hypertension and Kidney Disease Secretary-General Mustafa Anı said the findings were alarming. "One unit change in the average BMI of society actually means that millions who were of normal weight are now slightly overweight, and those who were slightly overweight are now overweight and those who were overweight have become victims of

obesity. Those who were already obese have become seriously obese. This is what the results mean," he noted. Emphasizing that the study results showed that women were more overweight than men in all age groups, Anı said the weight increase in the four-year period was also higher in women than in men.

He also indicated that the obesity rate in Turkey is now 50 percent, with the primary factor behind the higher rate being overeating and low levels of physical activity. Anı said 85 percent of respondents said they never exercise, while 10 percent reported they sometimes exercise and only 5 percent were regular exercisers. However, half of those who said they exercised regularly did so less than three hours per week. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 17**

