

# Men with sensory loss are more likely to be obese

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Men who suffer sensory loss, particularly hearing loss, are more likely to be physically inactive and obese than women, according to a new study published in the *European Journal of Public Health*.

Researchers analyzed data from more than 23,000 Spanish adults, and examined associations with [physical inactivity](#) and obesity in people with vision and [hearing loss](#), and explored differences between men and women.

Results suggest [inactive people](#) with hearing loss were 1.78 times more likely to be obese compared to those who did not have any hearing loss. In people who had difficulty seeing, the odds ratio is slightly smaller, with a likelihood of obesity being 1.375 times higher than those who did not report [vision loss](#).

The association between [physical activity](#) and obesity was higher in men with hearing loss, who were 2.319 times more likely to be obese than women who reported difficulty hearing. Obesity in those with sight loss was 1.556 times higher in inactive men than women.

Those with combined seeing and hearing difficulties had the highest prevalence of physical inactivity (44.8%) and obesity (26.1%). Analysis showed a significant association between physical inactivity and obesity in men with vision or hearing loss, but not in women.

Around 62% of adults in Spain are overweight, with 26% reporting as obese. In the UK, the figures are broadly similar at around 64% and 28% respectively, suggesting strong similarities between the countries.

A total of 11.04% of the people surveyed self-reported vision loss, 6.96% reported hearing loss, and 3.93% reported suffering both vision and hearing loss.

Lead author Professor Shahina Pardhan, Director of the Vision and Eye Research Institute at Anglia Ruskin University, said:

"Although women were overall less physically active than men, we found

an association between physical inactivity and obesity in men, but not in women. This indicates that, especially in people with vision and hearing losses, exercise and being active has a very important role in preventing obesity for men.

"Adults, especially those with sensory losses, should be encouraged to be as physically active as possible but there are obviously challenges, strongly suggesting that intervention and encouragement would play a very important role.

"An [effective strategy](#) to increase the levels of physical activity in this population group would be through targeted intervention programs based on health awareness on the importance of physical activity."

**More information:** Shahina Pardhan et al, Gender differences in the association between physical activity and obesity in adults with vision and hearing losses, *European Journal of Public Health* (2021). [DOI: 10.1093/eurpub/ckab077](#)

Provided by Anglia Ruskin University

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