

## Genetics are not to blame

### New study finds unhealthy lifestyles, not genetics, primary cause of obesity

The typical college student is likely to have experienced unwanted weight gain. Now, overweight and obese people may find comfort in science. A recent study suggests that a genetic mutation contributes to overeating, implying that some may have more than their actions to blame for their hefty plight. While genetics may be a factor for a few, this study does not account for the rapidly ballooning waistlines of the American population.



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in America, with more than 31 percent of the Alamo City's adult residents considered obese. Considering the national trend, this title should not be taken lightly. The same figures reveal that the number of obese adults has risen 74 percent in the last decade alone. Now, almost one-quarter of the entire population is considered obese. However, people battling weight problems should not be so quick to blame genetics.

The same studies linking binge eating to genetics also found that only 5 percent of their obese test subjects showed the mutation. This means that 95 percent of the people who were tested cannot blame obesity on genetic mutation.

As an formerly-slim college student can attest, the proverbial "freshman 15" results from eating the wrong foods and sitting around the house, not a change in genetics. Unless the U. S. population is currently experiencing a radical change in genetic makeup, the problem is actually unhealthy habits



and lifestyles.

The American diet, says the CDC, increasingly consists of large portions of unhealthy foods. Grocery stores are stocked with ultra-processed selections, and shoppers often opt for "low-fat" choices that contain more calories than the foods they are trying to avoid. Fast-food restaurants are also extremely popular, as well as sugar-loaded soft drinks.

In addition to eating a terribly unhealthy and high-calorie diet, the activity level of Americans has greatly declined. With the advent of time and labor-saving technologies such as dishwashers, cars and elevators, there is less of a need to expend precious calories doing simple tasks. In fact, according to the CDC, about a quarter of Americans report doing no physical activity at all, much less exercising regularly.

For anyone who has been to Europe, the effects of these cultural habits are apparent. In large part, Europeans eat smaller portions than Americans, and they are more active.

Many get exercise simply because they have to walk or bike to work instead of drive, which can make a big difference. The results are clear: according to BBC statistics, the prevalence of obesity in the United States far surpasses that of almost all European countries, some by more than 200 percent.

With this in mind, there is no excuse for America's trend toward obesity. If lifestyles don't change, everyone may suffer. Obesity is a dangerously unhealthy condition—not simply a condition that involves having a little extra fat on one's midsection. The National Institute of Health estimates that obesity costs the national economy almost \$100 billion annually in various ways, including medical costs and lost productivity. Seeking to pass blame onto a rare genetic mutation will not help the 95 percent of people in the study who are simply too lazy to help themselves.

In the vast majority of cases, obesity does not result from a disease or a genetic mutation, but from bad eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle. To solve the problem, people should accept responsibility, get off the couch and trade the cheeseburger for a workout.

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## Iraqi war does not meet Christian criteria

Can President George W. Bush, as a deeply devoted Christian, wage the current invasion of Iraq titled "Operation Iraqi Freedom" and not violate the tenets of war outlined by his faith? The Christian just-war doctrine, debated and refined by religious scholars for more than a 1,000 years, states criteria that must be met before resorting to a war that may be considered justified.



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In his book, "War: A Primer for Christians," Joseph L. Allen, professor emeritus of Christian ethics at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, explains these criteria. So the question remains: Does the current war in Iraq satisfy these criteria? No, it doesn't even come close. The most fundamental criterion, according to Allen, is justifiable cause. But the Bush Administration has failed to prove that Iraq is about to use weapons of mass destruction or sell them to terrorists. It has no real proof of an Iraqi connection to Sept. 11 or al-Qaida.

Even worse, some of the Bush administration's justifications for war have been built on lies. The Bush Administration asserted that Mohammed Atta met with an Iraqi spy, but that claim was later proven false, according to Newsweek. The Bush Administration also pressured the Navy to change the status of Lt. Cmdr. Michael Scott Speicher, who was lost the first day of the 1991 Gulf War, from "missing" to "prisoner of war," even

though the Pentagon had no new evidence Speicher was alive, according to MSNBC.com. Evidence that Iraq tried to secure uranium from Niger for nuclear weapons proved to be forged, according to The Washington Post.

Sometimes a preemptive strike may be justified if attack is imminent. Allen gives the vivid example of Israel attacking Egypt and Syria by air in 1967 after learning of an imminent attack on Israel, but the Bush Administration has had to scramble for excuses for the Iraq attack and has failed to show a justifiable cause for war.

Another important criterion is that the decision to declare war must be made by a legitimate authority. The U.N. Security Council resolution 1441 promised "serious consequences" to Saddam Hussein if Iraq failed to disarm. But no matter how "serious consequences" is interpreted, the United States and its coalition did not have the authority to engage in warfare without securing the approval of the U.N. Security Council.

Allen explains, "It is justifiable to resort to war only after all peaceful alternatives ... have been exhausted without success." This clearly was not the case with Iraqi disarmament. Iraq was not being completely cooperative in disarmament, but U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix indicated that Iraq was complying with resolution 1441 and if given a few more months, Iraq could have been disarmed peacefully, according to the Sun Network of India.

Allen says, "The proportionality criterion prohibits resort to war if the evil effects of doing so will ... exceed the evil to be pre-

vented ... by going to war." At this point, there is no indication that waging this war is better than continued attempts at peaceful disarmament of Iraq. Although a morose notion, the world community should hope that a substantial amount of weapons of mass destruction are found in Iraq. Then the massive loss of life already incurred will not have been in vain.

"When Christians go to war, they are to do so out of love of their enemies, as well as the victims involved," according to Allen. Many Americans are looking for revenge after Sept. 11, and have managed to turn the frustration at the failure to capture Osama bin Laden to Saddam and innocent Iraqi citizens. Revenge is clearly not an acceptable reason to go to war under the Christian doctrine. And it must be emphasized that there is no evidence of an Iraqi connection to Sept. 11. Therefore, attacking Iraq as payback for the terrorist attacks on America is morally and logically wrong.

As a follower of Christ, Bush knows that Jesus calls on Christians to make peace and not war. Only the president knows how he reconciles the tenets of his faith with the current war in Iraq he's leading.

Meanwhile, for those of all religious backgrounds who believe the war is unjustified, there is not much to be done now that it is underway, except to pray for the heroic servicemen and women fighting it and the innocent people who will suffer needlessly because of it.

Collins Ezeanyim is a senior computer engineering major.

### MAIL CALL

#### Support the troops, don't support war

In response to a March 28 mail call:

In this bastion of ultra-Bush-conservatism here in Aggieland there are few things that I agree with. I do agree that this University, despite how great it is, is not so great for minorities, and something has to be done about that. I do agree that we have to beat the hell outta t.u., and I do agree that Saddam needs to be relieved of power for the greater good of the people of Iraq. I am, however, in disagreement with our present situation. I am in disagreement with the war, and I feel that it is unjust. Poor Yorick's is not justified by refusing to sell French Vanilla coffee. Now, they now sell Freedom Vanilla. This is outright absurdity. I am in disagreement with the idea that you cannot separate your convictions of war without your support for our troops abroad. I support the troops in that I want them to return home safely and unscathed. And I pray for their safety for as long as they are needed over in Iraq.

Fighting for Iraqi people's freedom is a reason but not a justifiable one. Despite that, Saddam must be taken out. I think our leadership should call a spade a spade and say that we are going over there for protection of our interests. Oil is a strategic resource. In all honesty, it is not the logical reason for starting a war, but it is an important aspect that just cannot be thrown out as liberalist ranting.

As I write this, my brother, 1st Lt. Johnathan Leming, is flying over to Iraq to do his job as so instructed by our president and as so expected by us. So please pray for him and all other soldiers and Aggies who have close ones in the war, as I will do tonight.

Marcus Leming  
Class of 2003

#### Iraq's violations are incomparable

In response to an April 3 mail call:

Vinod Srinivasan's arguments about parading POWs are as superficial as they are trite. There is a small, insignificant document called The Bill of Rights (you might have read it) and in said document, there is a right known as "Freedom of the Press." This means that the press corps is its own entity and not subject to the U.S. government. However, in Iraq, it is Al-Jazeera all the time. The government has complete control of what is and (more importantly) what is not seen. By this, the Iraqi government is choosing to show POWs. In the United States, the press corps (along with censors) decides what goes on the air.

Now, on to invading a so-called "sovereign nation." Iraq violated countless U.N. sanctions, expelled U.N. investigators and harbored terrorists. This argument is extremely old, but the funny thing is, it is just cause.

Lastly, how is it ridiculous to rebuke someone for an immoral action and then attempt to persuade them from repeating it? Saddam should treat POWs justly because a horrible fate at the hands of a military court awaits him if he does not. And if the Iraqis want the U.S. forces to stop bombing their country into the Stone Age, then yes, they should roll over and play dead. It is laundry day, and we're bringing the Maytag.

Matt Malone  
Class of 2003

Without provocation? What would you call Saddam killing more than 50,000 Iraqi Kurds using chemical weapons? The tortures and killings of his staunchest opponents? Or how about all the chemical weapons that he had and supposedly destroyed, but could show no evidence supporting the claim? What about the violation of U.N.

Resolution 1441? There is no international law stating that a country cannot attack another. If that was the case, then when Iraq invaded Kuwait, it too violated international law because there sure wasn't any provocation there. I truly cannot believe you feel the way you do when it comes to Iraq violating the Geneva Convention.

Maybe we should show no regard for life and human decency much like they did. How can you not feel sorrow for those Americans who are just following orders and are murdered for it? Yes, we are at war, but at the same time, we are causing as little bloodshed as possible. I wish the same could be said for Iraq.

Josh Canuteson  
Class of 2005

