

Reasoning is not the same as problem solving

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The prestigious scientific journal *The Lancet* has recently published the most comprehensive and detailed report to date on the global issues of obesity and underweight⁽¹⁾. This important global study included data from 1,537 adults and 385 Colombian children, who were probabilistically sampled from the five main cities in the country by the research team led by Dr. Carlos Olimpo Mendivil, coordinator of the Diabetes, Lipids, and Metabolism Laboratory at Universidad de los Andes.

The figures are striking: in adults, 36.2% are overweight, and 21.3% are obese, with women being the most affected. Children, too, are gaining weight: one in three exceeds the upper normal limit for their age in terms of body mass index (BMI). It is alarming to see how excess weight among Colombians has risen sharply compared to the 2015 findings of the Encuesta Nacional de Situación Nutricional de Colombia (ENSIN)⁽²⁾.

To address this issue, the main article in our journal provides reliable data on therapeutic strategies available from both the digestive and neuroendocrine systems to treat a condition whose etiology is more likely rooted in behavioral and social factors. The field theory proposed by Kurt Lewin, recognized as the father of modern social psychology, left us with the concept of *frustration*, understood as the conflict arising from competing motives⁽³⁾. Based on this principle, he described four types of conflict, one of which is relevant for this editorial: the double approach-avoidance conflict, which refers to the tension an individual experiences when having to choose between two or more mutually exclusive options that have similar attractive positive outcomes and potentially avoidable negative consequences.

It is worth recalling this Gestalt principle of social psychology when considering the various therapeutic options available for treating obesity, with known effectiveness for surgery, and now also available through pharmacology and digestive endoscopy. At this point, the article by Dr. Costa Barney and colleagues provides what is necessary⁽⁴⁾.

Reasoning is not the same as solving a problem, but given the circumstances, we are currently facing a significant issue with multiple solutions, each offering benefits and potential drawbacks, making it very difficult to make decisions based solely on the available evidence. As the saying goes, if there are many solutions to a single problem, it is because none are truly good enough. Thus, we are left with the option of reasoning through the most reliable data to design the best solution for each specific case.

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