

# THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN BODY MASS INDEX AND MORTALITY IN HISPANICS

La'Trese Davis<sup>1</sup>, Juan Gallegos<sup>2</sup>, Beverly Gonzalez<sup>3</sup> & Che Smith<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Alcorn State University

<sup>2</sup>University of Houston - Downtown

<sup>3</sup>University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign

<sup>4</sup>Spelman College

## Abstract

The prevalence of obesity among US adults increased from 12.0% in 2000 to 17.6% in 2001, an approximated increase of 5.6estimated 21.4 million obese US adults. According to the Aphrodite Women's Health, obesity among Hispanic women has increased to 80% from 1991 to 1998, and currently about 25% of Hispanic women are obese. These nationally representative data document a substantial increase in overweight among US adults and support the findings of other investigations that show notable increase in overweight during the past decade, however, not sufficient reported data exists for key ethnic groups. It is evident that different ethnic groups have unique body compositions; thus, it is important to investigate all aspects and implications of adiposity for many ethnic groups rather than a select few. Currently, there are countless publications that have compared measures of obesity for blacks and whites, with little to no information pertaining to Hispanics and other races. Understanding the reasons underlying the increase in the prevalence of overweight in the Hispanic population in the United States and elucidating the potential consequences in terms of morbidity and mortality present a challenge to our understanding of the etiology, treatment, and prevention of obesity. As the United States Surgeon General warned in 2001, if we continue to ignore the epidemic of overweight and obesity, its effects will cancel out any progress made in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases exacerbated by obesity.