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An occupational perspective of overweight and obesity

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The prevalence of overweight and obesity in Australia has been increasing since the early 1980s. Over the past ten years, the incidence of overweight adults has steadily risen while the rate of adult obesity has also increased over the same period. Most recently, it has been reported that 60% of Australians aged 25 years were overweight or obese. Prevention and management of overweight and obesity is one of the top 10 National Health Priority areas. The most common current interventions for treating overweight and obesity are dietary restriction and dietary modification, physical exercise regimes, and surgery.

In this paper, we will present a case for the necessity of taking an occupational approach in the management and treatment of overweight and obesity. The impact of overweight and obesity on quality of life and engagement in daily occupations has been under-researched. More specifically, we contend that occupational lifestyle redesign may be appropriate in assisting to manage the complex issue of overweight and obesity in Australia; it may be that considering this issue from an occupational perspective will be essential for containing health care costs and increasing health and well-being for Australians affected by this issue.

This presentation aims to provide participants with the following:

- A broad overview of current literature relevant to overweight and obesity including statistics, definitions, and current management strategies.
- An understanding of the significance of applying an occupational perspective to the problem of preventing and managing overweight and obesity in Australia.