

PRESS RELEASE
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YouGov Survey: Obesity in the UAE

Dubai, UAE: A recent survey conducted by YouGov finds 85 percent of online respondents in the GCC consider obesity a serious health issue in their country of residence, indicating high level of awareness of the growing health problem in region. The GCC ranks among the world's most obese regions, according to a report issued by the United Nations in July 2013.

The majority (85 percent) of online respondents in the GCC agree Diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and high cholesterol are also serious health problems in their country of residence. Among online respondents in the GCC, women are more likely to identify these diseases as a threat than men.

In an effort to reduce obesity rates, many countries in the GCC are launching initiatives to reduce obesity among their populations. "Your Weight in Gold", a weight loss challenge launched by the Dubai Municipality awarded AED 2.8 million in gold to winners based on how much weight they lost.

Unfortunately, it seems that despite such initiatives, attitudes towards nutrition remain problematic among online respondents in the GCC, as do eating habits. For example, among online respondents in the GCC, more than half (56 percent) claim to eat out in a restaurant/café or fast-food outlet at least once a week, a significantly higher percentage compared to online respondents in North Africa (43 percent) and Levant (38 percent).

Also, when discussing health-related attributes such as, "I pay careful attention to what I eat", "I believe food can be healthy and tasty at same time" and "taking care of my health is a priority for me" a lower proportion of online respondents in the GCC seem to be health conscious compared to those from North African and the Levant.

Health Attributes	Top 2 Boxes – Agreement Scores		
	GCC	North Africa	Levant Region
I pay careful attention to what I eat	75%	83%	80%
If a food doesn't taste good, I won't eat it no matter how healthy and nutritious it is	61%	68%	68%
I believe food can be healthy and tasty at the same time	78%	85%	85%
Taking care of my health is a priority for me	75%	81%	79%

Fina Robles, Healthcare Research Specialist at YouGov, said, "The results show us that most of the residents across the GCC countries are aware of the serious consequence that obesity and cardiovascular diseases bring to their health. However, despite their understanding, their lifestyle and eating habits do not reflect that, as many continue enjoying the guilty pleasures of fast-food on a weekly basis. It appears therefore to be a need for training on good healthy habits and benefits, instead of limiting the health campaigns to awareness and consequences of obesity"

The survey was conducted using the YouGov Online Panel May – August 2013. The results are based on a total sample of 28,926 respondents living across GCC, Levant, North Africa and Asia region. Countries considered in each region: GCC – Bahrain , Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi, United Arab Emirates; Levant – Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Jordan; North Africa: Libya, Tunisia, Sudan, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt and Asia: Pakistan, India. The YouGov panel is broadly representative of the online population within these regions.

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