

## Monday briefing: Dangers of obesity laid bare

Most severely affected 50% more likely to die in middle age. Top story: Being overweight is having 'huge impact' on nation's health



The worst obesity in middle age can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes 12 fold. Photograph: Chris Radburn/PA

Those with the highest levels of obesity are risking serious illnesses and premature death at a rate **50% higher** than those of a healthy weight<sup>1</sup>, according to a new study of 2.8 million people.

This includes **12 times** the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, **22 times** the risk of sleep apnoea and **nearly four times** the risk of heart failure. Even the least obese, with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 to 35, have **twice** the risk of high blood pressure, **nearly twice** the risk of heart failure and nearly **six times** the risk of sleep apnoea.

The study, which looked at patient health records, gives a real-life insight into obesity, as opposed to data taken from a clinical trial. It was carried out by Novo Nordisk, the Danish pharmaceutical company that manufactures insulin for diabetes. However, the company's Nick Finan, who is also an honorary professor at University College London, said it showed that conditions linked to obesity were "phenomenally high" in the UK.

*"It drives home the huge impact that obesity is having on the health of our nation," he said. "People should know what their BMI is. Those who are overweight or have obesity should be asking their doctors to be assessed for whether they have already developed some of these diseases."*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/apr/29/severely-obese-people-in-middle-age-50-more-likely-to-die-early-study-finds>