

Box 1 – Causal web of influence on the prevalence of obesity

As illustrated here (Fig. 1), many factors at the national, state, community, family, clinical and individual levels affect energy imbalance and obesity. While obesity is ultimately a physiological process, many factors at each level (individual, family, clinical, community and macro) are important, and must be linked to achieve our goals. Furthermore, any change at any level aside from one at the metabolic level that affects energy utilisation or related functions must deal with the factors causing energy imbalance. Few countries have been successful in arresting or reversing the obesity epidemic in large populations and we must search for ways to address this imbalance over the life cycle.

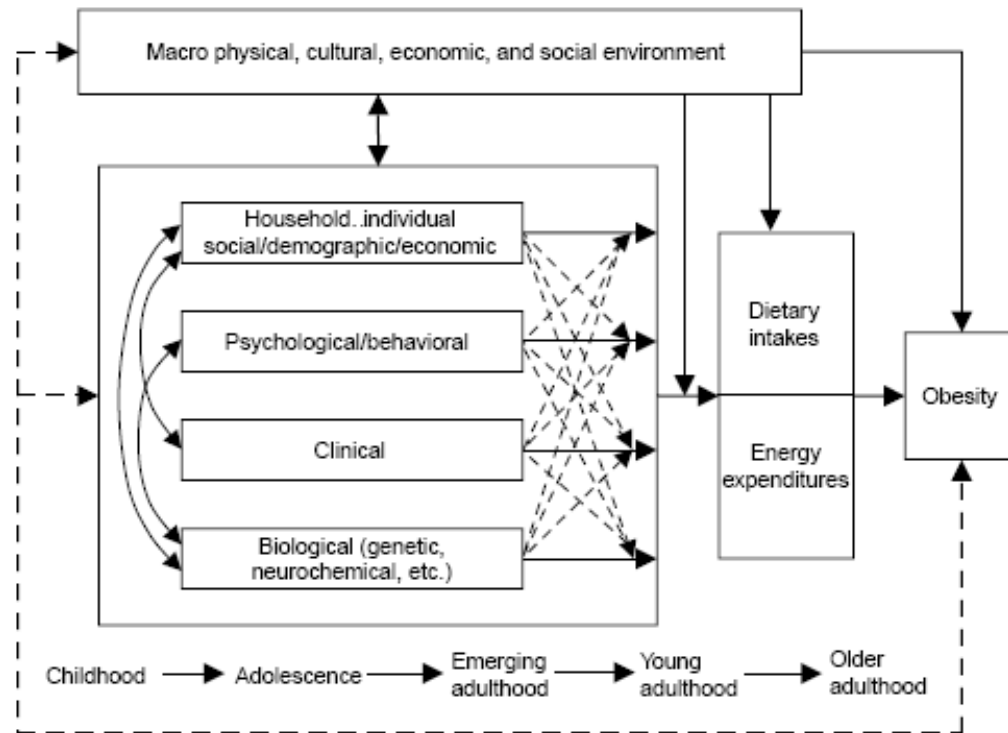


Fig. 1 Causal web of influence on the prevalence of obesity. *Source:* adapted from Kathleen Mullan Harris, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill