



SPOTLIGHT

VU University Medical Center of Amsterdam.

PRESS RELEASE

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€3.8m project to see why Europeans gain weight

A study of the environments that cause weight gain among Europeans is being launched by a network of 13 research centres across the region, with a budget of €3.8m.

Writing in this month's edition of the medical journal *BMC Public Health*, the organisers of the project, dubbed SPOTLIGHT, say they will be looking at the physical and social environment which shapes people's behaviour, and will also identify the best opportunities for reducing the epidemic of obesity in the European community.

More than 50 % of the European adult population is now overweight and up to a fifth of the population is obese, but differences have been found dependent on age, household income and culture as well as between different countries across the region. "While these differences help us focus on potential causes of obesity, they are not enough to explain what the specific drivers of weight gain are on a day-to-day basis," said project manager, Dr Jeroen Lakerveld, of the VU University Medical Center of Amsterdam.

"We need to understand how the physical and the social environment lead to changes in people's activity levels and eating behaviour," he said. "We need to understand the interplay between the barriers and difficulties to maintaining a healthy weight, and more importantly, we need to identify what the best options are for solving these problems."

The SPOTLIGHT Project has received funding from the European Commission's research budget, which will be shared between 13 research groups in eight European countries. Local geographical information will be enhanced with remote imaging techniques and the project will generate an interactive web-atlas of current interventions. The project will be completed in 2016.

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Notes:

1. The details of the SPOTLIGHT Project are published in the journal BMC Public Health.

Jeroen Lakerveld et al, "Sustainable prevention of obesity through integrated strategies: The SPOTLIGHT project's conceptual framework and design." *BMC Public Health* 2012, 12:793.

See <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/12/793/abstract>

2. Countries involved in the SPOTLIGHT Project are: Netherlands, Portugal, UK, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, France and Hungary.

VU University Medical Center	Netherlands
University of Paris 13	France
University of Oxford	United Kingdom
University of Maastricht	Netherlands
University of Ghent	Belgium
University of Debrecen	Hungary
University of Bergen	Norway
Metropolitan University College Copenhagen	Denmark
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	United Kingdom
International Association for the Study of Obesity	United Kingdom
Faculty of Human Kinetics	Portugal
European Association for the Study of Obesity	United Kingdom
Blox Group	Netherlands

3. Further details of the SPOTLIGHT Project are available at

<http://www.spotlightproject.eu/>

4. The SPOTLIGHT project is funded with a grant from the European Commission DG Research, Seventh Framework Programme. The products of the research are the responsibility of the authors: the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of them.



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