New video gallery helps broadcast media promote unbiased coverage of obesity

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The Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity has launched a new, free resource to aid members of broadcast media in the creation and delivery of fair, unbiased video coverage of obesity and weight-related topics on television, video, and online.

With more than one-third of U.S. adults obese, the media is an influential source of information about obesity and shapes the public's attitudes. Several decades of research show that obese people are highly stigmatized in the U.S. and suffer from inequalities in employment, education, and health care as a result of weight discrimination.

Additional research shows that the media is an especially pervasive source of stigmatization against obese persons. A 2011 Rudd Center study of popular news websites found that 65 percent of video footage accompanying online news stories about obesity stigmatized overweight and obese adults, and 77 percent of news videos addressing childhood obesity portrayed overweight and obese youth in a stigmatizing manner.

The Rudd Center's new video gallery provides more than 80 b-roll clips for use by content creators in the news media to help ensure that stigmatizing and pejorative portrayals of overweight and obese persons are avoided in broadcast media. The clips include footage of obese persons walking in public parks, gardening, shopping for produce at the supermarket, and in professional employment settings.

"We are pleased to now offer professional, high quality video footage that portrays obese individuals in non-stereotypical ways, and does not contribute to the depersonalization and stigmatization of overweight and obese persons," said Rebecca Puhl, Rudd Center director of research and weight stigma initiatives. "We encourage members of the media to accurately cover obesity-related topics and to avoid stigmatizing people affected by obesity."

The Rudd Center's video gallery can be accessed online [1]. The Rudd Center offers other free resources to help reduce weight stigma, including an updated image gallery with a current collection of almost 450 professional photographs that portray obese adults and youth in non-stigmatizing ways.

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[1] http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/videogallery