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**BETWEEN SIZE AND GUILT: AN ANALYSIS OF EATING PRACTICES AND
ATTITUDES IN OBESITY**

Lydia Castellanos Hevia (castellanoslydia@uniovi.es)

Sonia Otero Estévez (oterosonia@uniovi.es)

Sergio Sánchez Jimenez (sanchezjsergio@uniovi.es)

Obesity has increased globally in recent decades. Being obese increases the risk of chronic non-communicable diseases, which has led the World Health Organisation to consider it one of the main health threats of the 21st century. However, its continued growth cannot be explained solely from a health perspective. Its causes are deeply linked to the way we live. Proof of this is its uneven distribution within the population, with a higher prevalence among lower socioeconomic groups. Despite the relevance of the problem, current surveys, such as the Spanish National Health Survey (ENS), have limitations in that they do not consider the social and cultural factors that influence diet. This hinders a more complete understanding of the phenomenon and, consequently, the design of more effective strategies to address it.

This paper aims to analyse the discomfort associated with eating among people with obesity, comparing it with individuals who are overweight and of normal weight, and examining the role of gender and socioeconomic factors in shaping these experiences. Drawing on data from the ENCALMA2024 survey (n = 1,500), representative of the adult Spanish population and focusing on food practices, attitudes, and subjective meanings attached to eating. The analysis combines descriptive, bivariate, and exploratory multivariable techniques and despite the fact that it is in its preliminary phase, initial findings show that food-related discomfort differs significantly across BMI groups: while individuals with obesity often report attitudes favourable to healthy eating, their practices do not always align with these attitudes, generating higher levels of discomfort. The preliminary findings support the interpretation of obesity as a social process rather than a static category, highlighting internal heterogeneity within obesity.

Palavras-chave: obesity; food; practices; discomfort; attitudes.