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**Media contact:**

Eileen Leahy  
Elsevier  
+1 732 238 3628  
[jnebmedia@elsevier.com](mailto:jnebmedia@elsevier.com)

**Weight dissatisfaction associated with discomfort toward school-based weight measurements**

*Significant associations between student discomfort and being weighed by physical education teachers were found in a new study in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*

**Philadelphia, March 8, 2022** – Student weight dissatisfaction, higher perceived weight status, and being female were associated with discomfort with school-based weight measurements according to a [new study](#) in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, published by Elsevier.

To examine how body mass index (BMI) assessments are conducted in schools and whether student comfort with these assessments varied by students' perceived weight status and weight satisfaction, and who conducted the weigh-in, researchers interviewed a diverse group of fourth to eighth grade students in California schools about their experience being weighed in the prior school year.

“In about half of schools across the United States, school staff measures students' height and weight to assess their BMI, but there is limited research on the impact of these assessments on student comfort or even how these measurements take place,” said corresponding author Emily Altman, MPH, School of Public Health, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA.

The study demonstrated significant associations between student discomfort and being weighed by physical education (PE) teachers compared with school nurses. Only 30% of students reported having privacy during the measurements. And, in terms of comfort with the measurements, students who reported being unhappy with their weight and those who perceived themselves as overweight, were less comfortable with the assessments than their peers. Female students experienced greater discomfort being weighed than male students.



Caption: Significant associations between student discomfort and being weighed by physical education teachers were found in a new study in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* (Credit: iStock.com/Kwarkot).

“Our findings were that students who were unhappy with their weight or students that consider themselves overweight were more bothered by the measurements than their peers, and that was independent of BMI. So, these results point to an association between how students feel about themselves and their discomfort with the process independent of the number on the scale. In the end, what we really want is for students to feel good about themselves. And as such, we want to avoid doing anything that could increase stigma,” Altman said.

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#### **Notes for editors**

The article is “Weight Measurements in School: Setting and Student Comfort,” by Emily Altman, MPH; Jennifer Linchey, MPH; Gabriel Santamaria, BA; Hannah R. Thompson, PhD, MPH; and Kristine A Madsen, MD, MPH (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2021.11.007>). It appears in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, volume 54, issue 3 (March 2022), published by [Elsevier](#).

The article is openly available at [https://www.jneb.org/article/S1499-4046\(21\)00937-4/fulltext](https://www.jneb.org/article/S1499-4046(21)00937-4/fulltext).

Full text of the article is also available to credentialed journalists upon request; contact Eileen Leahy at +1 732 238 3628 or [jnebmedia@elsevier.com](mailto:jnebmedia@elsevier.com) to obtain a copy. To schedule an interview with the author(s), please contact Emily Altman, MPH, at [ealtman@berkeley.edu](mailto:ealtman@berkeley.edu).

An audio podcast featuring an interview with Emily Altman, MPH, and other information for journalists are available at [www.jneb.org/content/media](http://www.jneb.org/content/media). Excerpts from the podcast may be reproduced by the media with permission from Eileen Leahy.

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