

Metabolic Syndrome Unstable in Adolescence

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FROM THE ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC SESSIONS
OF THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

CHICAGO – Metabolic syndrome is a markedly unstable diagnosis during the transition from adolescence to adulthood, a prospective cohort study indicates.

When 728 healthy white and black public school students, half of them boys, enrolled in the study during 2001-

2002 at an average age of 14 years, at that time 3.2% met American Heart Association criteria for metabolic syndrome on the basis of having at least three of the five risk criteria.

Seven years later, the prevalence of metabolic syndrome had more than tripled to 10.3%. But in the interim, 52% of those with metabolic syndrome at baseline had remitted, Dr. Elizabeth Goodman reported at the meeting.

Fourteen percent of subjects with metabolic syndrome had the condition only at the interim 3-year follow-up assessment, added Dr. Goodman of Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.

Thus, most of the increase in metabolic syndrome during the transition to adulthood was attributable to the increasing prevalence of obesity rather than to persistence of metabolic syndrome in individuals.

At baseline, 60% of subjects were normal weight, 19% were overweight, and 21% were obese. Seven years later, 74% of youths who were normal weight at baseline remained so. Similarly, 78% of those who were obese at baseline were obese at follow-up. But only 42% of those who were overweight at baseline remained in that weight category 7 years later.

Dr. Goodman declared having no relevant financial interests. ■

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Monthly database, time period from May 2003 to March 2010.

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