**Eat Less, Lose Weight, Live Longer**

A recent study led by a UAB professor suggests that eating less and shedding pounds can help you live longer.

“For clinicians and public health practitioners who struggle to know what to advise the more than 50 million obese adult Americans, this adds another piece to the puzzle that suggests that intentional weight loss is likely to prolong life,” says David B. Allison, director of the Section on Statistical Genetics division of the Department of Biostatistics.

The study, featured in the March 2004 issue of *International Journal of Obesity*, found both caloric restriction and body weight affected longevity independently of each other in 1,200 rodents that were tested using 12 diet regimens.

“Caloric restriction, explains UAB graduate assistant Chenxi Wang, ‘is the only intervention that can consistently increase lifespan in many species. Caloric restriction also considerably decreases body weight.’

In addition, Wang says, there is substantial evidence that obesity is associated with increased mortality and decreased lifespan both in animal studies and human observational studies.

Allison notes that with respect to caloric intake and longevity, “It appears that, within reason, eating less is beneficial, regardless of what one weighs. And, within reason, weighing less is beneficial, regardless of how much one eats.”

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**Black Triplets at Greater Mortality Risk**

**Study Cites Lack of Resources for Disparities**

Once newborn black triplets leave the hospital, they are four times more likely to die than white triplets during their first year of life. This finding, from a study conducted by Hamisi Saihuh, an assistant professor in the Department of Maternal and Child Health, was published in the February issue of *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

“There is an epidemic of multiple pregnancies and births in the U.S.,” Saihuh says. “We’ve found that African-American parents with multiple births are really at a disadvantage because while they receive some instruction on how to care for their babies at the hospital, when they go home most don’t have outside assistance. It’s hard for parents to bring home three fragile children with no extra help.”

Saihuh found that African-American triplets are twice as likely to die during the first 28 days of life, and are nearly four times as likely to die during the period from 28 to 364 days after leaving the hospital. The study used National Center for Health Statistics data of live births and fetal deaths in the United States from 1995 to 1997.

Even though reasons for disparities are not clear, Saihuh’s research indicates that socioeconomic and educational differences could be factors. “To ensure that parents of multiple babies get as much encouragement and assistance as possible in caring for their children,” he says, “we need even more education and training classes during prenatal care, in addition to home visits by childcare professionals.”