

Feeling Fat Is a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

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New York Magazine:

Self-perception can sometimes work as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, according to an upcoming paper in *Psychological Science*: Namely, believing that you are fat may result in actually becoming fat. Sixteen-year-olds who were at a normal weight but misperceived themselves to be overweight had a 40 percent greater risk of becoming obese before they turned 30, reports Angelina R. Sutin of the Florida State University College of Medicine. (The paper isn't online yet, but Science of Us got an advance copy.)

Sutin used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health as the basis for her study, focusing on answers from 6,523 people who were surveyed at the ages of 16 and 28. As teenagers, the study participants' height and weight was measured in the lab in order to assess their body mass index, or BMI, a standard (if controversial) way of assessing healthy weight; they also answered questions like, "How do you think of yourself in terms of weight?" Sutin and her team zeroed in on the adolescents whose BMIs indicated that they were at a normal weight but whose answers indicated that they perceived themselves to be overweight or obese; the researchers compared these participants with the teenagers who accurately perceived their weight.

Read the whole story: [New York Magazine](#)