

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. MARY  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2010**

**Question**

“Would the Minister advise the rates of the different categories of obesity by age in Jersey and state whether her Department holds comparative data on other European countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark and France and, if so, state how Jersey compares?”

Would the Minister inform members of the additional costs which obesity is likely to place on the health service in the future especially in the care of the elderly, and what action, if any, is she planning to take to tackle this matter?”

**Answer**

**Comparative data**

An estimated 55% of adults in Jersey are overweight (of which 17% are obese) and an estimated 40% of 5 year old children are overweight (of which 12% are obese). Unlike the UK we do not currently hold data on 10 year olds but are exploring ways to collect it in future.

When compared with other countries of the western world, Jersey falls approximately half way between the best and the worst (see Chart 1 below).

**Costs**

The States Medical Officer of Health has estimated that the cost of obesity and being overweight to Jersey is around £7.4 million, of which approximately £2.2 million is healthcare costs. This is however a conservative estimate. Predictions in the UK suggest that the health care costs associated with obesity will double by 2050 and there is every reason to believe that this trend will also be reflected in Jersey.

More accurate costs should be available over the course of the next three years as Jersey participates in a study being carried by the British Heart Foundation and John Radcliff Hospital in Oxford. The study will include an examination of costs.

Obesity mainly affects children and young to middle aged adults, as opposed to the elderly. It is anticipated that today's younger generation will die younger than their parents did partly as a result of obesity and the increased incidents of diseases associated with being obese or overweight (see Chart 2).

The Health and Social Service Department has produced *Health for Life*, a five-year strategy which details the action need to address this growing problem. It is essential to understand the obesity is a complex social problem which will not be solved by just through medical interventions or increasing the capacity of the hospital. The focus must be on:

- enabling and supporting people to make healthy choices, which requires cross-departmental effort in areas relating to cycling, exercise, health eating etc;
- prevention rather than cure, which requires greater investment in primary care monitoring and screening services.

**Chart 1.**

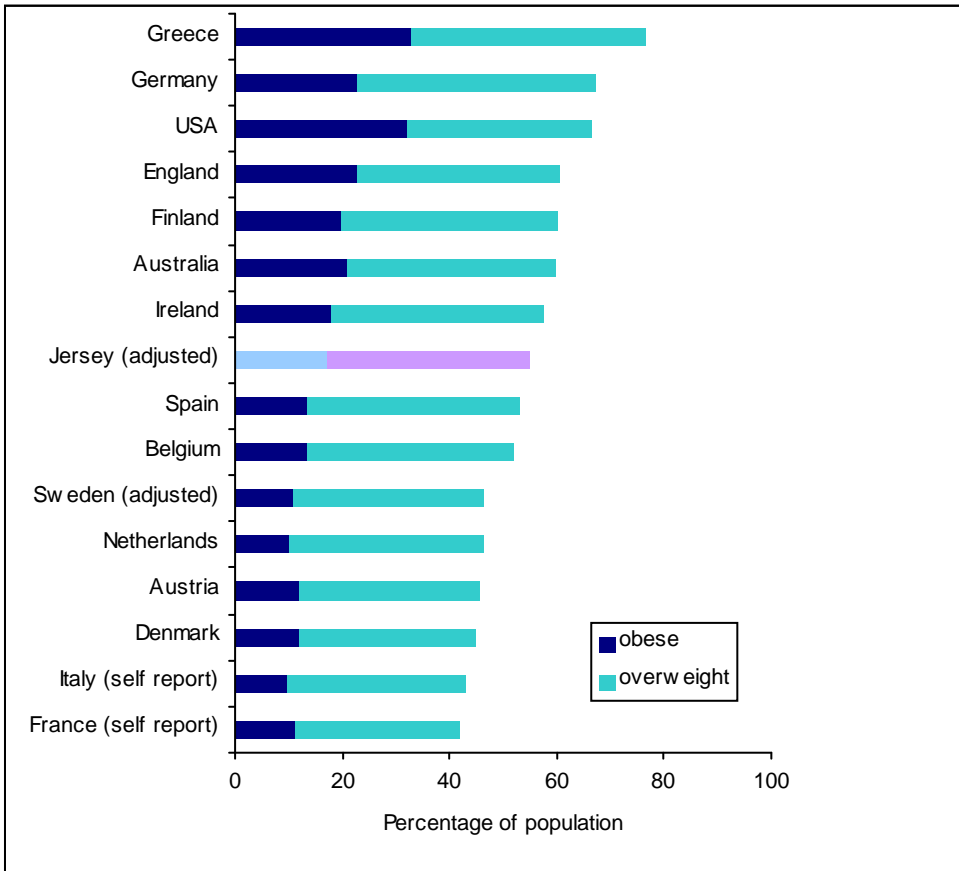


Chart 2

