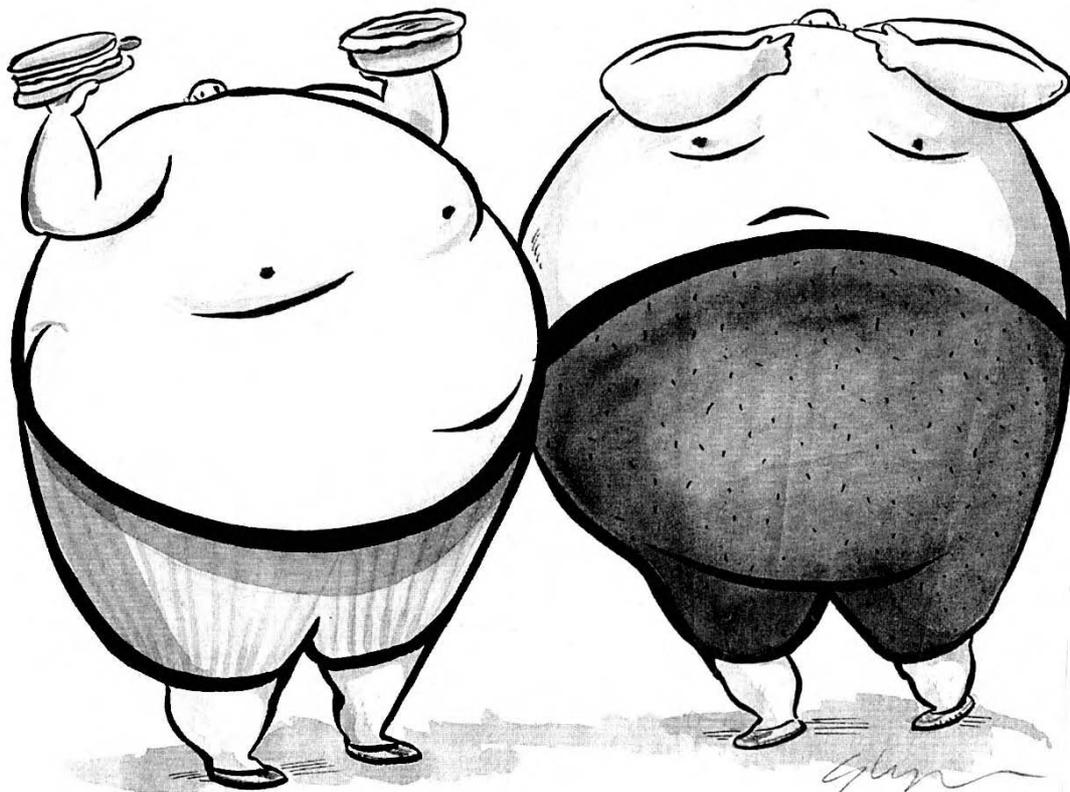


## Tekst 3

### BODY AND MIND



## Overweight may feed on itself

As fatness levels rise, **Victoria Griffith** suggests we need to be unhappy with our weight to control it

1 Leslie Heinberg, a psychologist  
at Johns Hopkins University in  
the US, published a contro-  
versial finding on weight con-  
5 trol a year ago: we need to be  
unhappy with our bodies to  
have the motivation to shed  
excess fat.

2 While that conclusion may  
10 seem obvious to lay people, it  
contradicts what many scientists  
have come to believe about  
obesity. A number of weight-  
loss programmes aim to boost  
15 participants' self-image before  
putting them on a diet. Self-  
criticism causes stress, and  
stress leads to overeating, the  
argument goes.

3 20 As the world gets fatter, re-  
searchers are searching for ways  
to control weight. The most  
simple explanation for the epi-

demic is that we are taking in  
25 too many calories and expen-  
ding too little energy. Yet this  
does little to address the real  
question about weight control:  
what are the factors that under-  
30 mine our self-control?

4 According to one theory,  
humans are programmed to eat  
too much because throughout  
most of our history food was  
35 scarce. Overindulgence was an  
insurance policy against days  
when there might be no break-  
fast, lunch or dinner. A hearty  
appetite was a positive survival  
40 trait. In modern nations, food is  
plentiful and affordable. Yet our  
genetic make-up is static. The  
result is too much fat.

5 Such knowledge, however,  
45 has done nothing to help control  
obesity, and may have made the

epidemic worse by encouraging  
people to believe they have no  
control over their long-term  
50 weight.

6 Environmental factors such  
as television viewing and junk  
food play a role. Yet these  
factors have been in place for  
55 decades. The lifestyle of Ame-  
ricans has not changed drama-  
tically since 1990, so why are  
the rates of obesity rising so  
dramatically?

7 60 Research such as Heinberg's  
provides clues. Heinberg's ex-  
periment asked 88 women and  
61 men about to embark on a  
diet and exercise programme to  
65 rate their feelings about their  
bodies. Although participants  
lost equal amounts of weight  
during the first six months, stark  
differences later emerged. Fif-

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70 teen months after the experi-  
ment, those who had been  
most dissatisfied with their  
bodies had lost an average of  
7.25lb. Those most satisfied  
75 with their physique had gained  
2.5lb. So negative self-image  
may play a role in weight con-  
trol, but the widespread occur-  
rence of obesity distorts  
80 people's concept of normal  
weight.

8 Researchers have long seen  
the media's fascination with  
thinness as a negative influence  
85 on society. The obsession en-  
courages eating disorders such  
as anorexia nervosa and bu-  
limia, say critics. No one knows  
precisely how many Americans  
90 suffer from such disorders, but  
the figure is certainly no more  
than 10 per cent. In contrast, up  
9 95 to 70 per cent of Americans are  
clinically defined as overweight.  
Yet people may pay more  
attention to the cues around  
them than to fantasy images on  
television or in magazines.  
100 Judging oneself to be fat or thin  
may depend more on the weight  
of those we live and work with.  
"Obesity may feed on itself,"  
105 says Michael First, a professor  
of psychology at Columbia  
University. "As you see more  
obese people around you, it  
becomes less stigmatised, more  
normalised. There's a possible  
110 feedback loop that breaks down  
the motivation to maintain a  
healthy weight."

10 If obesity breeds more  
obesity, it does not bode well  
for the future, because the crisis  
115 is only likely to get worse. It  
also presents a challenge to  
health officials, who may be  
hard-pressed to increase dis-  
comfort about obesity without  
120 fuelling prejudice against  
overweight individuals.

11 Yet society must come to  
terms with the psychology of  
overeating to address the  
125 problem. "Research in this area  
is chronically underfunded,"  
says Kelly Brownell, director of  
Yale University Centre for  
Eating and Weight Disorders.  
130 "Anyone who pretends to know  
the answer is crazy. The only  
thing we really know is that  
food has tremendous psycho-  
logical meaning to people. How  
135 to translate that knowledge into  
weight loss is another thing."

*The Financial Times*

## ■ Tekst 3 Overweight may feed on itself

- “we need to be unhappy with our bodies to have the motivation to shed excess fat”  
(lines 5-8).
- 1p 10  In welke alinea van het artikel wordt deze uitspraak nader gepreciseerd? Noteer het nummer van deze alinea.
- 1p 11 ■ Judging from the introduction and paragraphs 1 and 2, who would agree with the statement:  
*If you disapprove of your body, it is very difficult to lose weight?*
- A “Victoria Griffith” (introduction)  
B “Leslie Heinberg” (line 1)  
C “lay people” (line 10)  
D “many scientists” (line 11)
- 1p 12 ■ Wat is de relatie van alinea 3 met de rest van het artikel?  
In alinea 3
- A formuleert de schrijfster het kernprobleem waar het artikel over gaat.  
B geeft de schrijfster haar eigen mening over het onderwerp.  
C vat de schrijfster de inhoud van de voorafgaande alinea’s samen.
- 1p 13 ■ Which of the following is true according to the theory outlined in paragraph 4?
- A Building up a fat reserve used to be essential for staying alive.  
B Rich people usually have greater weight problems than poor people.  
C The kinds of food that people eat have changed radically through the ages.  
D These days people in the western world eat far more than they used to.
- 1p 14 ■ What is Victoria Griffith’s response to the explanation of modern-day overweight given in paragraph 4?
- A She accepts it and supports it with some observations of her own.  
B She presents various kinds of evidence in order to prove that it is wrong.  
C She states that it has no practical use and is possibly counter-productive.
- “so why are the rates of obesity rising so dramatically?” (regels 57-59)
- 1p 15  Wat is de laatste alinea van het tekstgedeelte waarin de schrijfster deze vraag beantwoordt? Noteer het nummer van deze alinea.
- “stark differences” (regels 68-69)
- 1p 16  Waardoor werden deze verschillen veroorzaakt volgens alinea 7?
- “Researchers have ... on society.” (lines 82-85)
- 1p 17 ■ How does Victoria Griffith look upon the view of these researchers?  
According to her,
- A it appears to be correct, judging from the statistics on obesity.  
B it is probably incorrect, considering the facts.  
C there are not enough objective data to prove it right or wrong.
- “Obesity may feed on itself” (regel 102)
- 1p 18  Leg uit wat Michael First met deze uitspraak bedoelt.
- 1p 19 ■ What is the main aim of paragraph 10?
- A To emphasise the unwillingness of some people to try and control their weight.  
B To express doubts about the present strategy of dealing with weight control.  
C To point to the difficulties to be expected if Professor First’s theory is correct.  
D To warn that people may be discriminated against because they are overweight.

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- 1p **20** ■ Which of the following describes the overall character of this article best?
- A It criticises researchers for not having found a satisfactory explanation for the problem of overweight.
  - B It illustrates that we do not have enough insight into the causes of overweight to tackle it effectively.
  - C It makes clear that the problem of obesity is not taken seriously enough.
  - D It proposes measures to be taken to bring widespread obesity to a halt.