



The views of teenagers with obesity, their caregivers, and doctors: a plain language summary of the ACTION Teens global survey

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Summary

What is this summary about?

This is a summary of a research survey called ACTION Teens. In our survey, 12,987 people from 10 countries answered questions about obesity. They were: 5275 teenagers with obesity, 5389 caregivers of teenagers with obesity, and 2323 doctors who provide medical care for teenagers with obesity.

What were the main results of the survey?

Most teenagers with obesity were worried about their weight and thought that losing weight was their responsibility. Many teenagers had already tried to lose weight. For teenagers, wanting to be more fit or in better shape was the top reason for wanting to lose weight.

Some caregivers did not realize how worried their teenager was about their own weight. There were also some caregivers who were not aware of their teenager's recent attempts to lose weight.

As a group, the doctors did not know the main reasons why teenagers want to lose weight. They also did not know the main reasons preventing teenagers from losing weight.

What do the results of the survey mean?

Teenagers with obesity will be better supported and understood if there is better communication between teenagers, caregivers, and doctors.

Where can you find the original article on which this summary is based?

You can read the full article called 'Misalignment among adolescents living with obesity, caregivers, and healthcare professionals: ACTION Teens global survey study' published in the journal *Pediatric Obesity* for free at:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ijpo.1295>



Who is this information for?

The aim of this summary is to help people understand the most interesting results of the ACTION Teens survey. This includes:

- teenagers with obesity
- caregivers of teenagers with obesity
- doctors
- anyone interested in understanding obesity in teenagers.

Who sponsored this survey?

Novo Nordisk A/S sponsored the ACTION Teens survey.

What is obesity?

Obesity is a **chronic disease**. People with obesity have more body fat than what is healthy. This can make a person more likely to have other diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. Obesity needs long-term support from doctors.

Doctors use a measurement called **body mass index**, or **BMI**, to check if you have obesity. This measurement uses your weight and height to find out if your weight is healthy and appropriate for your height.

Body mass index (BMI): a measurement based on someone's weight and height. It is used to find out if you are a healthy weight.

Chronic disease: a disease that continues for a long time.

Why did we do this survey?

More teenagers have obesity than ever before. However, not many researchers have looked at:

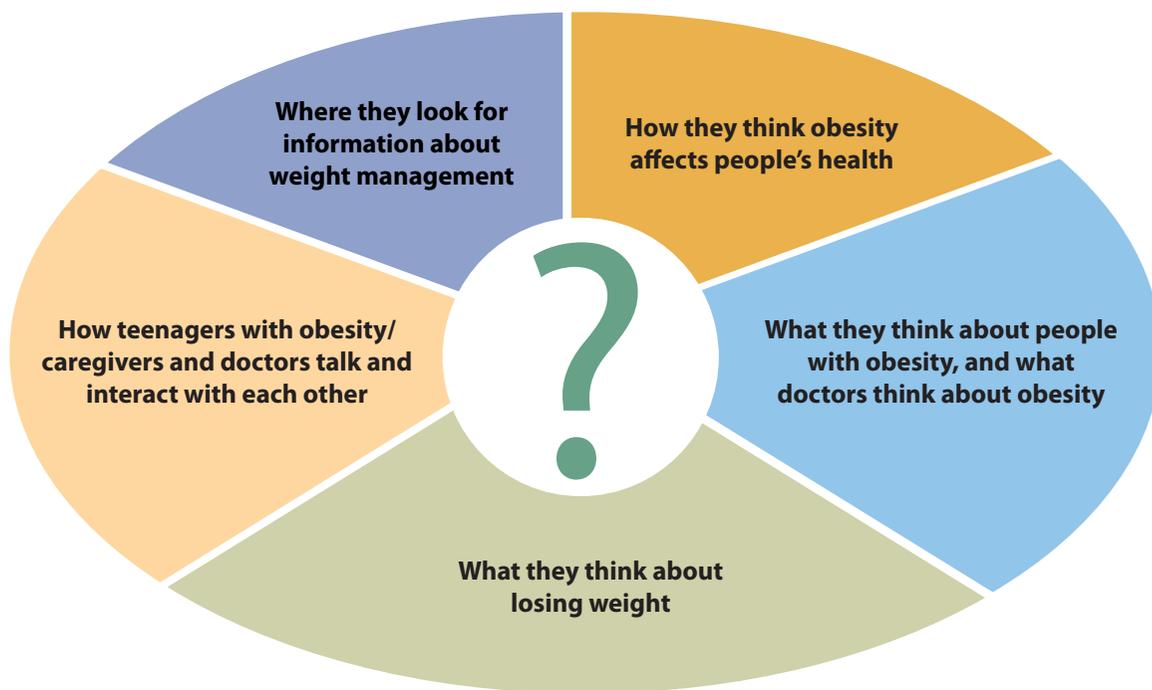
- how teenagers feel about obesity
- what teenagers find hard about having obesity
- what help teenagers with obesity might want or need.

Some researchers have found that teenagers with obesity and their caregivers have different ideas about how to deal with their obesity.

In ACTION Teens, researchers sent a survey to:

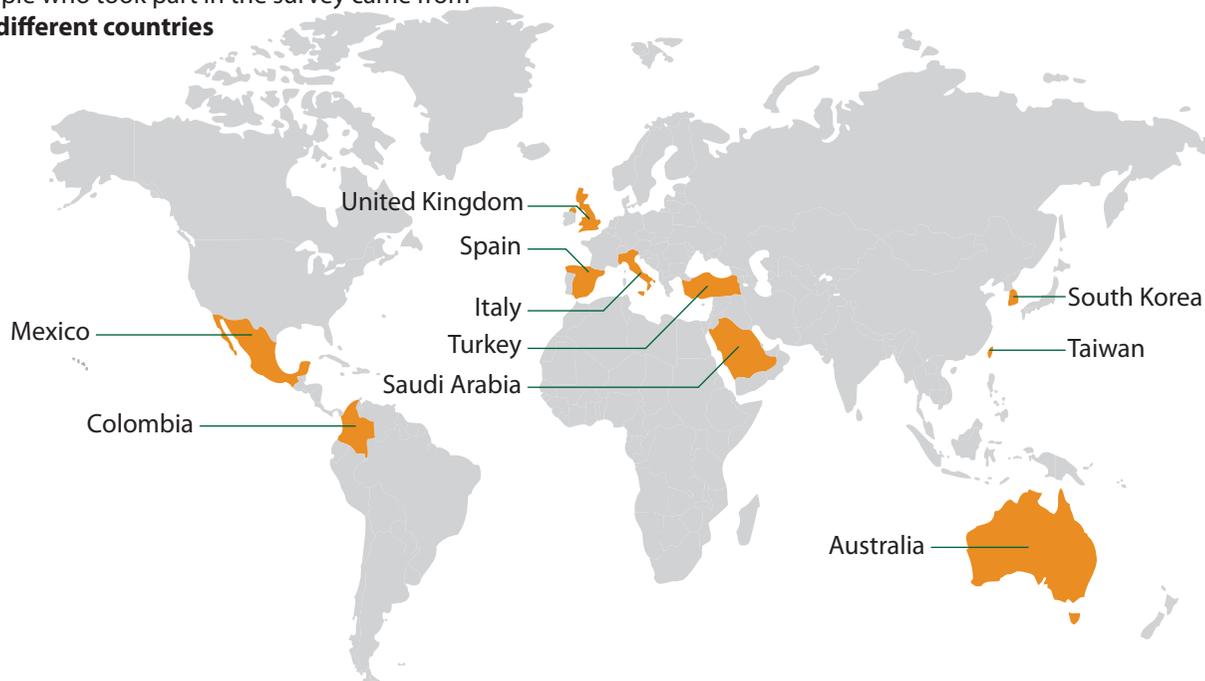
- teenagers with obesity
- caregivers of teenagers with obesity
- doctors who provide medical care for teenagers with obesity.

What did the survey ask questions about?



Who took part in the survey?

People who took part in the survey came from **10 different countries**



12,987 people answered the survey. They were:

Teenagers with obesity



Caregivers



Doctors



How many took part?

5275

5389

2323

Key information about them

- ✓ Had a body mass index, or BMI, that showed they had obesity
- ✓ Were 12 to 17 years old

- ✓ The person caring for a teenager with obesity (for example, a parent or legal guardian)
- ✓ Lived at least half of their time with their teenager
- ✓ Took part in caring for their teenager's health

- ✓ Often provided medical care for teenagers with obesity

How many were male and female?



56% boys

44% girls



48% men

52% women



60% men

40% women

Out of every 100 **teenagers with obesity:**

- 56 were boys
- 44 were girls

Out of every 100 **caregivers:**

- 48 were men
- 52 were women

Out of every 100 **doctors:**

- 60 were men
- 40 were women

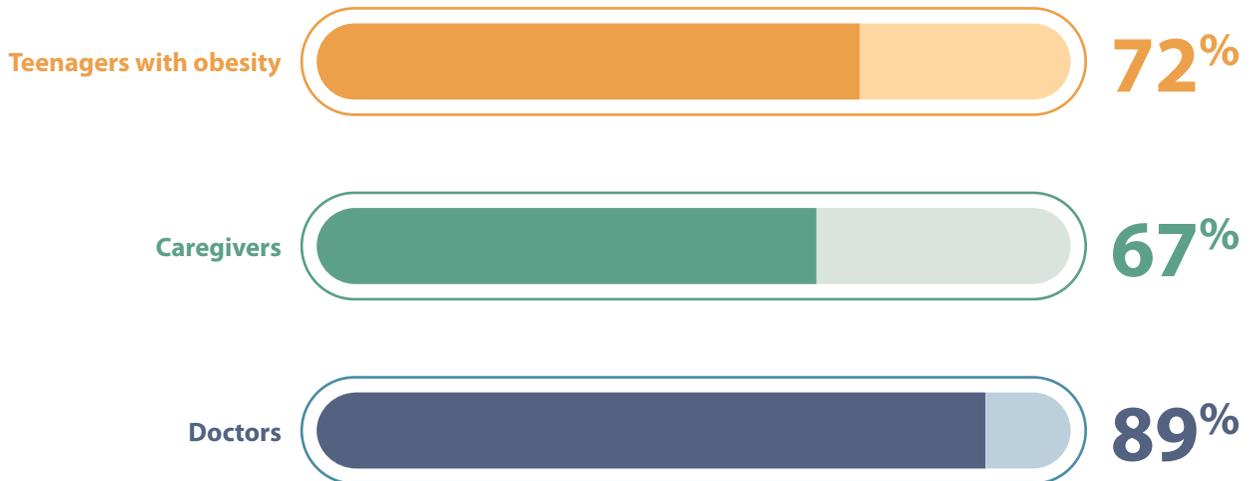
= 10% of people

What were the main results from this survey?

1

Doctors were most likely to believe obesity has a large impact on a person's health and wellbeing. Fewer caregivers believed this.

Percentage of people who believe obesity has a **strong/very strong impact** on health and wellbeing



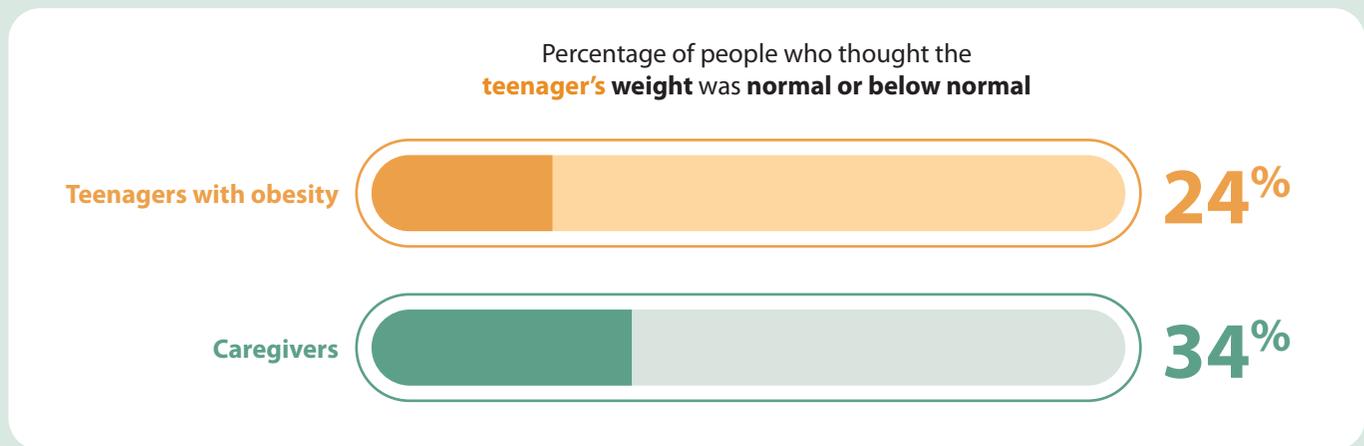
2

8 out of 10 doctors thought that obesity is a chronic disease.

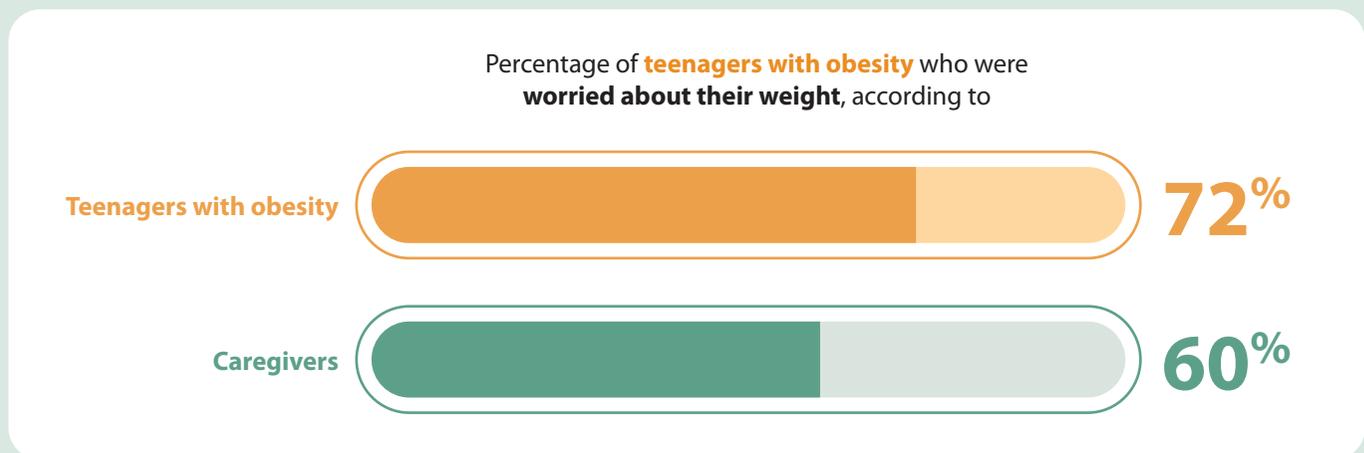
Percentage of **doctors** who thought that **obesity is a chronic disease**



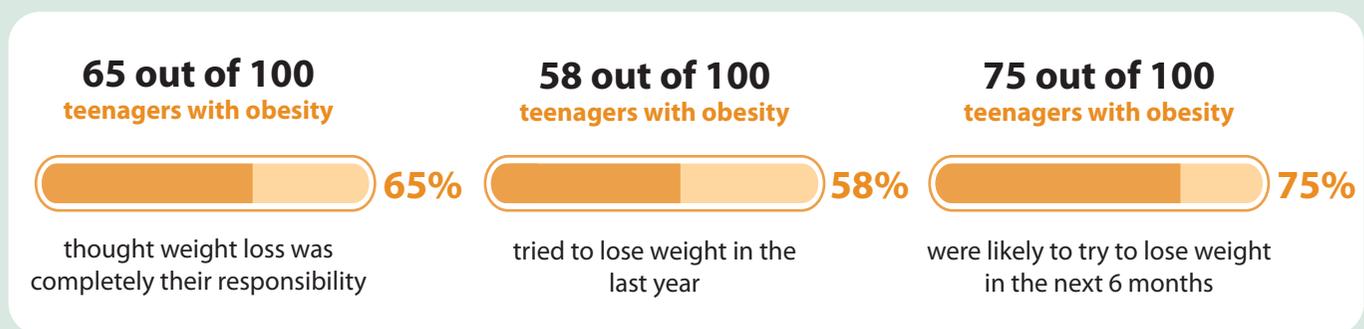
3 1 in 4 teenagers with obesity thought their weight was normal or below normal. Slightly more caregivers thought their teenager's weight was normal or below normal.



4 Nearly 3 out of 4 teenagers with obesity were worried about their weight. Caregivers thought just over half of their teenagers felt that way.



5 Many teenagers with obesity thought losing weight was their responsibility. Most had tried or planned to lose weight.



6

Caregivers and doctors did not realize how many teenagers with obesity had tried to lose weight in the last year.

58 out of 100
teenagers with obesity



tried to lose weight in the last year

41 out of 100
caregivers



thought their teenager had tried to lose weight in the last year

Doctors thought
38 out of 100



of their teenage patients with obesity had tried to lose weight in the last year

7

Teenagers with obesity and doctors did not agree on:

- what makes teenagers want to lose weight
- what prevents teenagers from losing weight.

The top 3 reasons **why teenagers want to lose weight**, according to



Teenagers with obesity

1st

I want to be more fit / in better shape

2nd

I am not happy with my weight

3rd

I want to be more confident / feel better about myself



Doctors

Joint 1st

Wanting to be more confident / have better self-esteem

Joint 1st

Wanting a better social life / to be more popular

3rd

Wanting to look like people their age

The top 3 reasons **preventing teenagers from losing weight**, according to



Teenagers with obesity



Doctors

1st Not being able to control my hunger

2nd My lack of motivation

3rd I like eating unhealthy food

1st Their unhealthy eating habits

2nd Lack of exercise

3rd Their preference for unhealthy food

8 Most teenagers felt they could talk honestly about their weight with their mother/father, but more than 1 in 3 felt they could not talk about their weight honestly with a parent. Fewer than 1 in 3 teenagers could talk honestly with a doctor.

Percentage of **teenagers with obesity** who felt they **could talk about their weight honestly** with...

Their mother/father



63%

A doctor



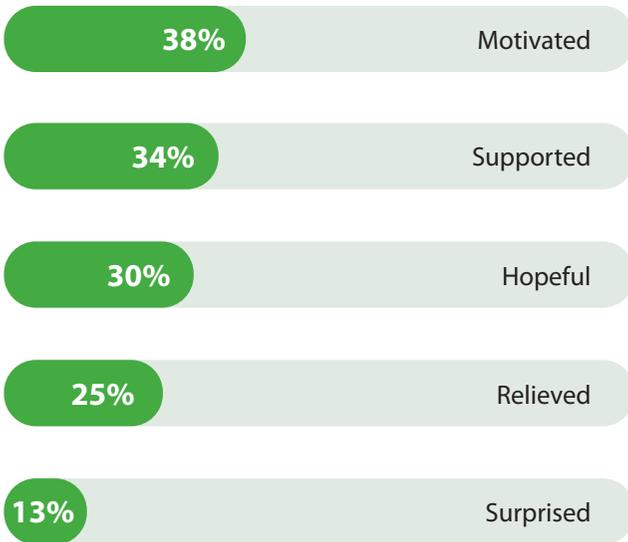
31%

9

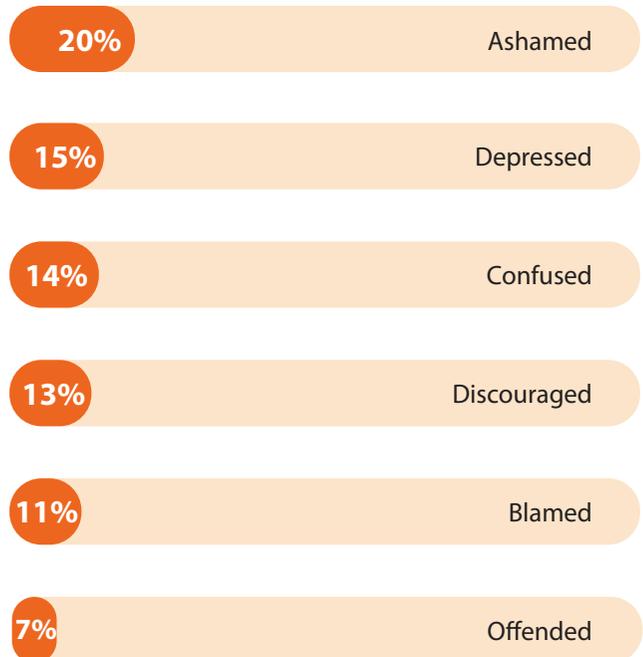
Teenagers with obesity had a mixture of feelings after talking with a doctor about their weight.

How **teenagers with obesity** felt after **talking about their weight** with a doctor

Positive feelings



Negative feelings



72 out of 100
teenagers with obesity



had at least one **positive** feeling

47 out of 100
teenagers with obesity



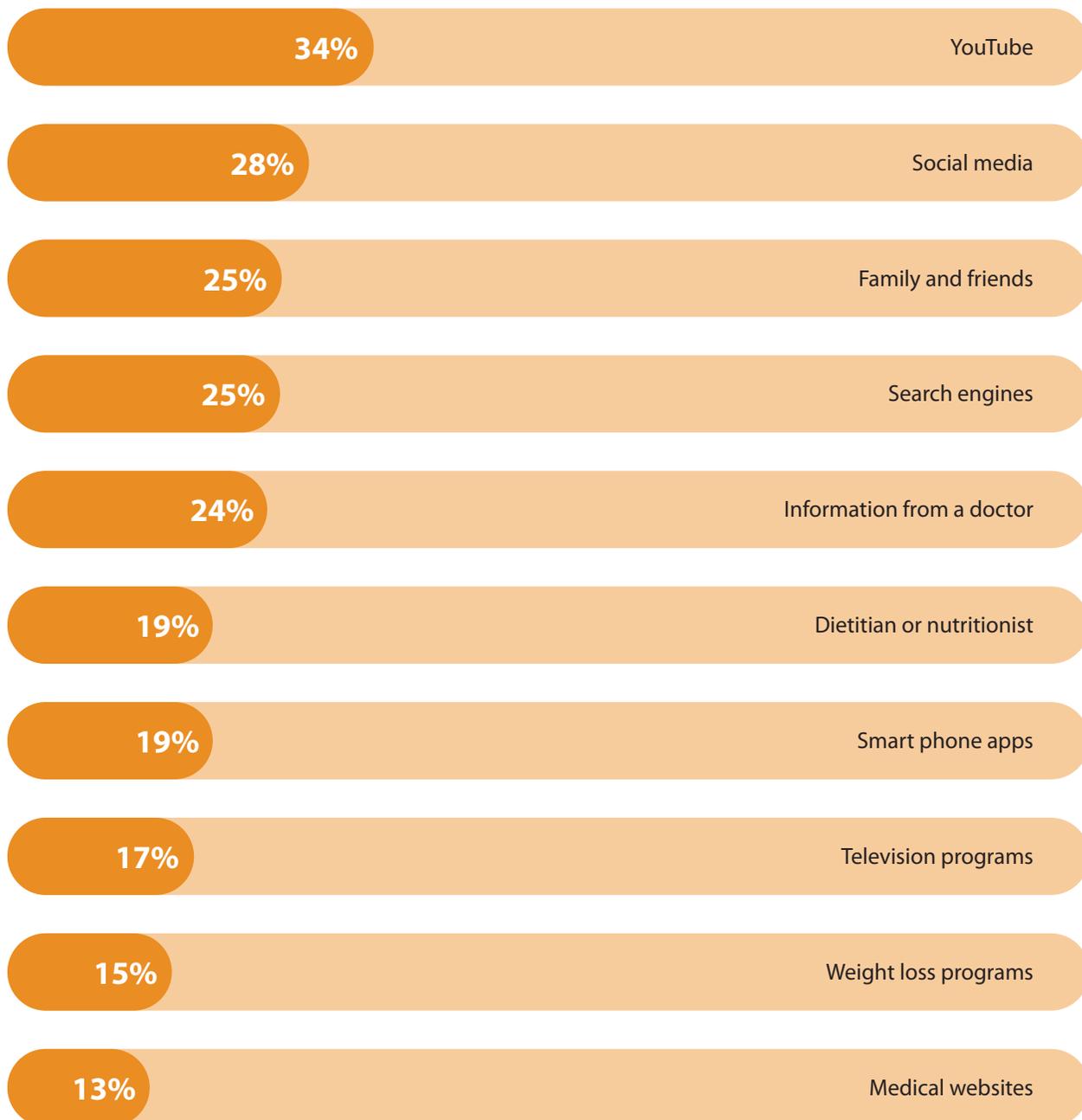
had at least one **negative** feeling

10

YouTube and social media were the main sources of information about healthy lifestyles and weight loss for teenagers with obesity.

What **teenagers with obesity** use to **learn about healthy lifestyles**, weight loss, and weight management

Top 10 answers



What do the results of this survey mean?

Most **teenagers with obesity**:

- were worried about their weight
- thought that losing weight was their responsibility
- had already tried to lose weight
- planned to try to lose weight soon.

Some **caregivers**:

- did not realize how worried their teenager was about their own weight
- were not aware of their teenager's recent attempts to lose weight.

As a group, the **doctors** did not know:

- the main reasons why teenagers want to lose weight
- the main reasons preventing teenagers from losing weight.

Take-home message

It is important that teenagers with obesity, their caregivers, and doctors talk and listen to one another. Teenagers will then be better supported and understood.

How this survey might be different from other information:

- These results are only from the ACTION Teens survey.
- Other researchers might find out different things about teenagers and obesity. This is because we asked our questions in 2021, and people might think differently in the future.

Where can you find more information about this survey?

Original article

The full citation of the original article is: Halford JCG, Bereket A, Bin-Abbas B, Chen W, Fernández-Aranda F, Garibay Nieto N, López Siguero JP, Maffei C, Mooney V, Osorto CK, Reynoso R, Rhie YJ, Toro-Ramos M, Baur LA. Misalignment among adolescents living with obesity, caregivers, and healthcare professionals: ACTION Teens global survey study. *Pediatr. Obes.* 17(11), e12957 (2022). doi: 10.1111/ijpo.12957. You can read the full article for free at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ijpo.12957>

Trial registration site

You can read more about the ACTION Teens survey at the following trial registration website: <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT05013359>

Educational resources

Learn more about obesity at the following websites:

- World Health Organization (WHO) – Fact Sheet on Obesity and Overweight: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight>
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) – Prevention of Overweight and Obesity in Children and Adolescents: Advocacy Strategy and Guidance: <https://www.unicef.org/media/92331/file/Advocacy-Guidance-Overweight-Prevention.pdf>
- World Obesity Federation (WOF): <https://www.worldobesity.org>
- Global Obesity Patient Alliance (GOPA): <https://www.gopa.org>
- The European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) – About Obesity: <https://easo.org/education/about-obesity>
- The European Coalition for People Living with Obesity (EASO ECPO) – Education: <https://euroobesity.org/education>
- Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) – Learn about Childhood/Adolescent Obesity: <https://www.obesityaction.org/education-support/learn-about-childhood-obesity>
- Obesity Canada (OC) – Resources: <https://obesitycanada.ca/resources/>

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Financial & competing interests disclosure

You can find the full author disclosure information in the original article.