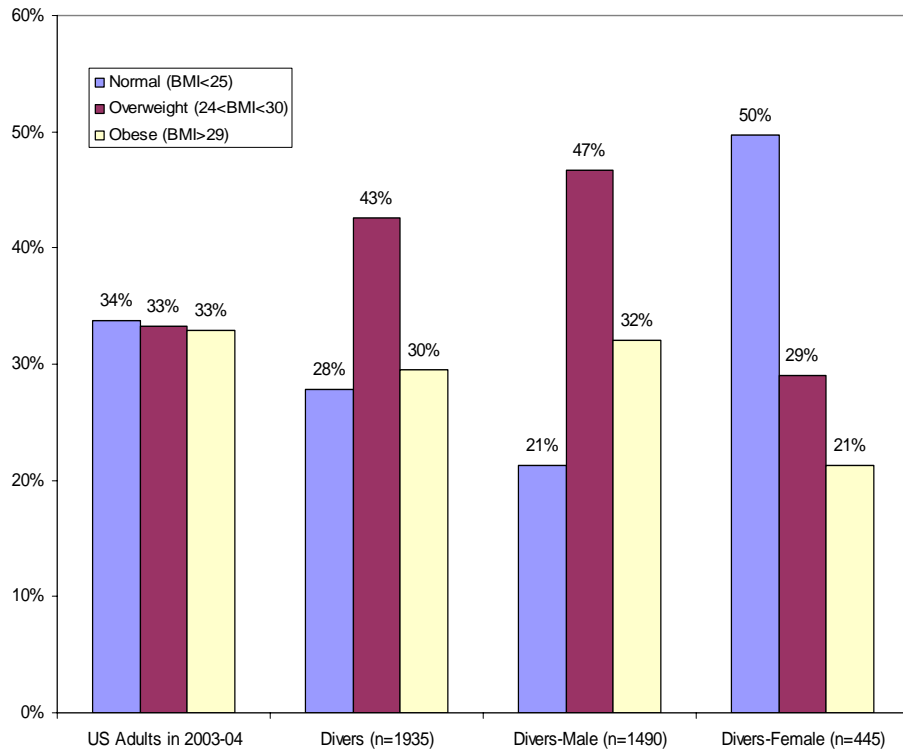


A Shrink Studies SCUBA



Table 1. Body Mass Index of Scuba Divers in 2003-04



What do my beautiful wife Lynn, Bonaire super-dive-model Suzi Swygert, *Into the Blue* movie stars Jessica Alba and Ashley Scott, and 221 female divers have in common? They were among the 50% of female divers (out of a random sample of 445) who were NOT overweight or obese according to their self-reported height and weight in the winter 2004 online diver safety survey as shown in **Table 1**.

Actually, my wife and Suzi and the movie stars were not in the survey, but I've seen all of them in wetsuits. As a girl-watcher and physician I can make a pretty good guess.

According to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, an estimated 66% of US adults age 20-74 years were overweight or obese in 2003-04 as shown in **Table 2**. This was based upon measured heights and weights and calculated

body mass index (BMI), expressed as weight/height² (BMI: kg/m²).

Unfortunately, we guys are not in as good shape. Only 21% of male divers (n=1490) in the survey were not overweight or obese. Put another way, 79% of us appear to be out of shape and are doing worse than the national average of 66%. My guess is that is because so many of us are built like Hercules and Hulk Hogan and the BMI does not take into account our massive muscle mass. Yeah, right...

If you have participated in any of our online surveys since 2000 and/or have a particular question about the results for future articles, then please email me at david@divepsych.com. In next week's column I will report the survey results on decompression symptoms and their relationship to obesity, an area of some question in the dive literature. □ *D. Colvard MD*



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Half of female divers have a weight problem; more than three-quarters of male divers do too Internet photo



In contrast we have Bonaire's dive-model, Suzi Swygert

Table 2. Age-adjusted* prevalence of overweight and obesity among U.S. adults, age 20-74 years

	NHANES II (1976-80) (n=11,207)	NHANES III (1988-94) (n=14,468)	NHANES (1999-2000) (n=3,603)	NHANES (2001-02) (n=3,916)	NHANES (2003-04) (n=3,756)
Overweight or obese (BMI greater than or equal to 25.0)	47.1	55.9	64.5	65.7	66.2
Obese (BMI greater than or equal to 30.0)	15.0	23.2	30.9	31.3	32.9

*Age-adjusted by the direct method to the year 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census estimates using the age groups 20-39, 40-59, and 60-74 years.

**NHANES II did not include individuals over 74 years of age, thus trend estimates are based on age 20-74 years.