13.4 Biological and Psychological Explanations for Obesity: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain briefly how social and cultural norms around food can influence obesity rates in a population.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Explain one strength and one limitation of using genetic explanations (such as FTO associations) to account for obesity, with brief reasoning for why each matters for psychology.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Outline evidence from twin, family and adoption studies that supports a genetic contribution to obesity.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

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Mark scheme · 13.4 Biological and Psychological Explanations for Obesity: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

states that social and cultural norms shape typical portion sizes, dietary choices and attitudes to eating occasions oe	**M1**
explains that norms promoting large portions, energy-dense celebratory foods, or high consumption of convenience foods can increase average calorie intake across a population, raising obesity prevalence oe	**A1**

Answer: Cultural norms that promote large portion sizes, regular consumption of calorie-dense convenience foods or social eating occasions encourage higher average calorie intake; when many people adopt these norms, population obesity rates can rise.

Question 2

states a valid strength, e.g. genetic explanations are supported by empirical evidence such as twin/adoption studies and molecular genetics oe	**M1**
explains why this matters, e.g. provides objective, biologically based predictors which can inform medical interventions and personalised prevention oe	**A1**
states a valid limitation, e.g. genetic explanations can be overly deterministic and may underplay environmental/behavioural influences oe	**M1**
explains why this matters, e.g. ignoring modifiable social and psychological causes could hinder behavioural interventions and stigmatise individuals oe	**A1**

Answer: Strength: genetic explanations are supported by twin/adoption studies and gene-association findings, offering objective predictors that can guide medical or personalised approaches. Limitation: they risk genetic determinism and may underplay environmental and behavioural causes; this could reduce emphasis on effective social and psychological interventions and increase stigma.

Question 3

mentions that monozygotic (identical) twins show higher concordance for BMI than dizygotic twins, suggesting a genetic influence oe	**M1**
states that family studies show relatives of obese individuals are at greater risk of obesity oe	**M1**
notes that adoption studies find adoptees' BMI correlates more strongly with biological parents than with adoptive parents, supporting heritability oe	**A1**

Answer: Twin studies show higher BMI concordance for monozygotic than dizygotic twins, family studies show higher obesity risk among biological relatives, and adoption studies find adoptees resemble biological rather than adoptive parents in BMI, all supporting a genetic contribution to obesity.

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