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# Palau: Obesity

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## Background

Located South of Japan in the Western Pacific Ocean stands a group of 340 islands that are about 2.5 times the size of Washington D.C. These Islands and the 16 states that make up these islands is known as Palau. Approximately 20,000 people ranging from many different races specifically Palauan, Filipino, Japanese and backgrounds that mainly speak Palauan. With a government system alike the United States, a president that is directly elected and serves a four year term, a council of chiefs that consists of the highest traditional chief from each state and reports to the president and the rest of the country. Palau is a beautiful country with rich landscapes, high tourism and heavy culture.



<http://www.dive-the-world.com/maps-palau.php>

## Issue

Some challenges that effect the Palau population are water pollution, lung and liver diseases and diabetes. The worst of all these problems is the major health issue of Obesity. Palau has the second highest obesity problem among all countries and territories. In 2014, CNN conducted research and found out that 47.6% of the country is obese (CNN, 2015). This is a very high number. The United States has a stigma that everyone is overweight but in comparison to Palau, the U.S. is only at about 34% of the population being obese. While Palau is 13.6 % higher in population obesity. When the U.S. has a population of 323 million and Palau has the population of only 20,000 these percentages of obesity are astounding and concerning. In 2008, Global Nutrition Report did a report on the prevalence of adult overweight and obesity and found that 56% of the female population was considered obese while 82% was considered overweight (Bhutta, 2014). Being overweight can lead to more problematic health issues like diabetes, heart disease, cancer and even death. Because of this rising problem, the death rate per 1000 people has risen from 6.8 in 2008 to 8.2 in 2017. (Index Mundi, 2017). Women who were older than 30 or obese were more likely to have problems like diabetes than women who were younger than 30) or non-obese (Sugiyama, M, 2017). We can assume that these problems arise



because Palau gets most of their food supply from the U.S., so what the U.S. eats, Palau eats. This country is also so spread out that it is very hard to get the healthy food across the islands, without the spread of healthy food, the people turn to easier less healthy options to eat.

### Solution

To be able to see the trends in the data and look more closely into the problem we must collect demographics, physical activity, body mass index, physical examination, eyesight, blood pressure, sexual history and contraception use, alcohol and drug use. (Pireport, 2010). If we look at all of these things we can distinguish the health problems that along with obesity, are killing the people of Palau, and also look into the specific areas that we can improve to make sure the people of Palau are improving in their health. If Palau wants to fix the rate of obesity at all it is critical they start educating the public about the problems, starting with the children about healthy eating habits. They need to invest more money in growing their own crops, and transportation so that the entire island can be fertile and grow its own food. Promoting exercise is another good way of bringing down the obesity rate. If a person works out at least 30 minutes in a day they can lose weight. If the people of Palau, outsiders from other countries and students and researchers from all over the world come together to make the change know and happen. I predict we will see the obesity rate go down, and the associated health problems will continue to improve,

overall making the beautiful country of Palau healthier and happier.

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