



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR  
2005 PROJECT SUMMARY**

<b>Name(s)</b> <b>Matthew W. Alexander</b>	<b>Project Number</b> <b>J1701</b>
<b>Project Title</b> <b>Fat Chance! Does Obesity Jeopardize Your Chance at Success?</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p> <p><b>Objectives/Goals</b> This research study attempts to identify the traits or qualities that people associate with persons who are obese. Research has shown that obese persons are wrongfully discriminated against because of their weight. Obesity is defined as a state of being #very fat or overweight.# (Webster#s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary, 1996). Approximately 34% of the adult and child population in the United States is obese. This is blamed primarily on the sedentary life style and poor eating habits of many Americans. In a world of video games, television, and fast food restaurants, it is no wonder that obesity is a rising problem. Research has shown that once obese, persons are faced with bias and discrimination in the workplace, schools, basketball courts, and in other aspects of life. This in turn can lead to a life of loneliness, ridicule and social isolation.</p> <p><b>Methods/Materials</b> Sixty-three male and female subjects were surveyed utilizing a three-paged survey. Subjects varied in age from 10 to greater than 60 years. Subjects were asked to complete a written survey which contained personal demographics and ascertained the participant#s opinion on the traits or qualities of the photos of persons on the survey. The persons pictured on the survey were both subjects who were obese and those who were not.</p> <p><b>Results</b> Results of the survey reveal that people have strong biases against obese or overweight subjects. Subject#s overwhelmingly associated negative traits and qualities to obese persons pictured on the survey. Not only did they associate negative traits, but they failed to associate positive traits or qualities to the obese persons pictured in the survey. These results support the hypothesis that if a person is obese, the obesity may jeopardize their chance for success in life.</p> <p><b>Conclusions/Discussion</b> Obese persons were rated by survey participants to possess traits and qualities which are negative and likely to limit their chance at success. The study found that participants demonstrate a bias against persons who are obese. The obese were found to have negative physical traits, poor habits and behaviors, psychological handicaps, and poor quality of life and chances for success. Despite this extensive display of bias against the obese, subjects nonetheless chose the obese persons as the individual most likely to be their best friend.</p>	
<b>Summary Statement</b> More negative traits are associated with obese persons as compared to those who are not obese.	
<b>Help Received</b> Mother and Father took surveys to work for volunteers subjects to complete.	