**FACT/ OPINION**

1. Obesity is a really big problem, but it is one I think we can solve if we just give it some more attention.

2. The National Institute of health did another study on obesity last year. They found that more than 1 in 3 adults in the USA were obese.

3. My dad believes obesity is influenced by a lot of social and economic factors.

4. Research shows that the problem of obesity is multiplied by food deserts – areas where it is hard to find a store selling nutritious food.

5. For me, obesity isn’t the biggest problem in America. That award goes to the opioid epidemic.

**EDITED LECTURE (TO BE USED WITH GOOGLE SLIDES PRESENTATION)**

So, we’ve talked a lot about the problems and causes of obesity - or, the condition of being extremely overweight - in the USA. We learned that this problem is an epidemic, which means a disease that is spread over a wide area. And, we know that around ⅓ of Americans are obese. But, to start things off today, I’d like to ask you a question.

What do you think is higher: the value of the economy in Qatar, or the cost of obesity in the USA? If you guessed the cost of obesity, you are correct! Today’s lecture topic is the cost of obesity in the USA. You will hear about three main areas that are affected: the medical costs; the cost at work; and the cost to transportation.

The number one cost of obesity in the USA is the medical cost. In the year 2008 alone, it was estimated that obesity cost Americans $147 billion in medical spending - that’s almost 10% of all medical spending in the USA. This is a huge amount of money, and it goes primarily towards fighting diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, as well as preventing problems arising from high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Productivity costs - or, how much obesity takes away from the workplace - are also very high. They generally fall into two categories: people who do not go to work, and people who are less effective at work. Compared to workers who have healthy weights, obese workers are 194% more likely to use paid time off. This means that they get paid, even when they don’t show up to work. Surprisingly, the people who do show up to work cost more than those who don’t. Obese people who come to work feel tired more often, and have trouble concentrating. They end up costing their workplaces around $12 billion each year.

In addition to medical and employment costs, obesity results in an enormous expense for transportation. Of course transportation is a very general word that encompasses many things, but obesity affects it in two major ways: the dollars spent on fuel; and the harm to the environment. Have you ever thought about how much the extra weight affects fuel costs? Well, the answer might surprise you. According to studies by large airlines, the cost of carrying around all that extra weight comes to around $750 million each year. For cars and trucks, that number climbs to around $3 billion. Furthermore, all that extra fuel use is very harmful to the environment. The extra carbon dioxide emissions, which are the cause of a type of air pollution, affect the atmosphere and hurt the quality of the air.

So, there you have it: the price of obesity in dollars and cents. Just think about how much less America’s annual bill would be if it did not have to pay for the medical, productivity, or transportation costs created by obesity. What would you do with all that savings?

**ORIGINAL LECTURE [harder format]**

Over the past several decades, obesity – or, being very, very overweight – has grown into a major global epidemic. What this means is that the disease affects many people in many places. In the United States, more than 60% of adults are overweight, and around 35% are obese. Have you ever stopped to think: how much does this epidemic actually cost us? Let’s take a few minutes to stop and look at the numbers. The major things that bring the bill way up are medical costs, productivity costs, and transportation costs.

Obesity is linked with a high risk of serious health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. So, as obesity levels rises, medical spending on the diagnosis and treatment of these diseases will also rise. In 2008 alone, it was estimated that obesity cost Americans $147 billion, or almost 10% of all medical spending. This is a huge amount of money. Some experts say that diabetes costs each American – even those who do not have diabetes – around $700 each year. And, overall, medical costs are expected to increase in the future.

Productivity costs – which means how much obesity costs at work – are high as well. This is because people who are obese are more likely to miss work due to health reasons, and people who DO go to work are likely to get less work done. First, we will look at those who miss work. Compared to people of healthy weight, obese workers are 194% more likely to use paid time off. In the United States, the failure to work due to obesity results in a loss of between $3 billion and $6 billion each year. Next, we will look at those who are less productive when they DO work. Surprisingly, it is estimated people who DO work cost more than those who DON’T. Even though they make it to work, they are more likely to feel tired and have trouble concentrating. It is estimated that these problems cost around $12 billion each year.

Finally, we will look at transportation costs. This affects two areas: the dollars spent on fuel; and, the environment. Fuel costs have been determined by airlines and passenger vehicles. According to the airlines, obesity cost an extra $750 million dollars each year. And, according to passenger transportation agencies – who monitor the cars and trucks using the roads – obesity cost around $3 billion more dollars in fuel. In short, it costs A LOT of money to transport the extra weight. Unfortunately, the extra fuel use affects the environment. It causes carbon dioxide emissions increase, which affects the atmosphere and air quality.