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**Overweight teenage boys are TWICE as likely to develop this killer disease later in life**

By Andrea Downey, Digital Health Reporter

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**FAT teenage boys are twice as likely to developing liver cancer later in life, a new study has found.**

They are also more likely to develop other severe liver disease, many of which are often fatal, according to research.

Experts examined data from more than 1.2 million Swedish men enlisted for conscription between 1969 and 1996.

The data was then linked with other health registers to assess whether these men went on to develop severe liver disease.

The researchers then looked at whether having a high body mass index (BMI) when they were aged 17 to 19 was linked to an increase of the disease.

Overall, there were 5,281 cases of severe liver disease including 251 cases of liver cancer during the follow up period – one year after conscription until December 2012.

The researchers, led by Dr Hannes Hagstrom, of the Centre for Digestive Diseases at the Karolinska University Hospital in Sweden, discovered that overweight men were nearly 50 per cent more likely to develop liver disease.

And the stats are worse for obese men – they are more than twice as likely to develop liver disease in later life than men of normal weight.

Men who developed type 2 diabetes during the follow up period also had a higher risk, regardless of how much they weighed when they signed up to military conscription.

They found that obese men with type 2 diabetes were three times more likely to have liver problems when they were older compared with non-diabetic, normal weight men.

They warned that increasing numbers of people who are overweight or obese could lead to rises in the number of cases of severe liver disease in the future.

The authors said: “The risk of severe liver disease was highly affected by a diagnosis of T2DM (type 2 diabetes) during follow-up, across all BMI categories.”

“Interventions to reduce the increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity should be implemented from an early age to reduce the future burden of severe liver disease on individuals and society.”

There are more than 100 different types of liver disease, which together affect at least 2 million people in the UK, according to the NHS.

The three main causes of liver disease in the country are obesity, undiagnosed hepatitis infection and alcohol abuse.

Yet, all these causes are preventable.