

Rising Rate of Media Misrepresentation

By ACSH Staff — May 26, 2010

MSNBC's *Nightly News* last night devoted a short segment to an [Extreme Eating](#) [1] list of high-calorie restaurant meals compiled by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). While the reporter acknowledges that each restaurant also offers lower-calorie options, he concludes by saying that the more calorie-dense options are a weighty issue for Americans, as this country's obesity rates just keep rising.

Obesity rates are *not* rising, says ACSH's Jeff Stier. That's not to say that obesity is not a serious problem or that we shouldn't do something about it, but for the media to continue to report falsely that obesity rates are rising when we know for a fact that those [rates leveled out](#) [2] about five years ago is a misrepresentation of the data. This is an example of the media agenda that supports things like a soda tax and government involvement with restaurant food options.

Many years ago, I spoke with the head of nutrition at Burger King. He was basically speaking on behalf of all restaurants when he told me, We are in the business of selling customers the food that they want to eat. He said Burger King tried to sell tofu burgers for a while, but no one bought them. It's up to the customers to make good choices. And as far as the media is concerned, obesity is a big enough problem without their exaggerations.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross adds, Michael Jacobson of CSPI wants to eliminate all high-calorie food choices throughout America, for our own good, he says. Most restaurants offer low-calorie selections, but banning delicious albeit fattening choices is, thankfully, not up to CSPI.

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Links

[1] <http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/news/20100525/group-warns-extreme-restaurant-meals>

[2] http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/weightloss/2010-01-13-obesity-rates_N.htm