



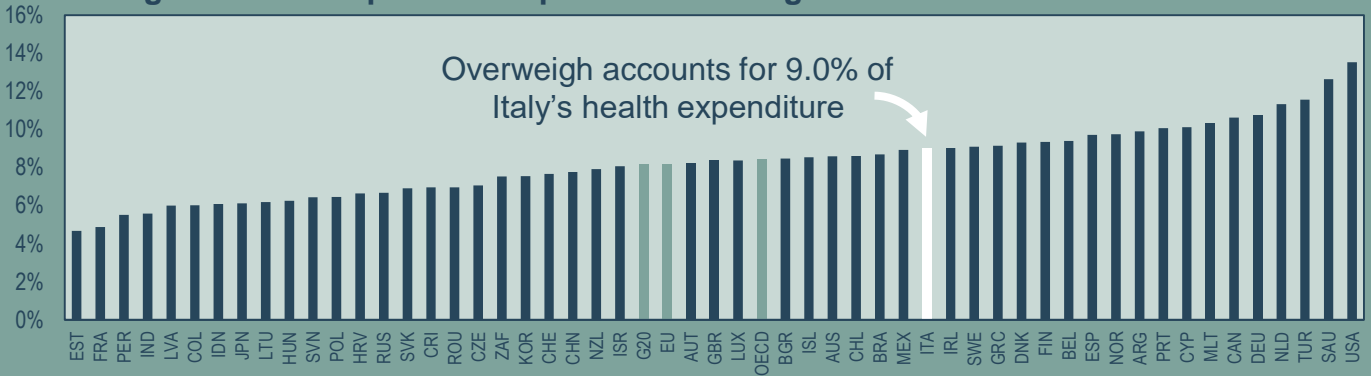
The Heavy Burden of Obesity

The Economics of Prevention

While the prevalence of obesity in Italy is lower than in most other countries, it still has significant consequences. Italians live on average **2.7 years** less due to overweight. Overweight accounts for **9.0% of health expenditure**, above the average for other countries. Labour market outputs are lower due to overweight by the equivalent of **571 thousand full-time workers** per year. Combined, this means that overweight reduces Italy's **GDP by 2.8%**. To cover these costs, each Italian pays an additional **EUR 289 in taxes** per year.



Percentage of health expenditure spent on overweight and associated conditions



To tackle the obesity epidemic, Italy has put in place a number of policies, including dietary and physical activity guidelines, back-of-pack food nutrition labels and voluntary nutritional standards in schools. However, more can be done.

Implementing a communications policy package or policies to encourage reformulation would **prevent non-communicable diseases, reduce health expenditure and increase the productivity of the workforce:**



A communications package – with mandatory front-of-pack labelling and advertising regulations, and mass media campaigns – could prevent 144 thousand non-communicable diseases by 2050, save EUR 62 million per year in health cost, and increase employment and productivity by the equivalent of 6 thousand full-time workers per year



Achieving a 20% calorie reduction for foods high in sugar, salt, calories and saturated fats could prevent 688 thousand non-communicable diseases by 2050, save EUR 278 million per year in health cost, and increase employment and productivity by the equivalent of 18 thousand full-time workers per year

Public health actions to promote healthier lifestyles have a positive impact on population health and are an excellent investment:

On average, for every 1 EUR invested, up to 6 EUR are returned in economic benefits