



# **Animal Models for the Study of Human Disease: Chapter 12. Invertebrates in Obesity Research: A Worm's Perspective**

*Soudabeh Imanikia, Stephen R. Stürzenbaum*

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An imbalance between energy uptake and energy expenditure can lead to obesity. In addition to the modulation of fundamental pathways, obesity can increase the risk of coronary heart diseases, high blood pressure, stroke, type II diabetes and some cancers. Given that key elements of the energy pathways (both sugar and fat) are evolutionary conserved, invertebrate research is an attractive alternative that overcome the many legislative, financial and experimental hurdles typical of research with higher metazoan animals. The premier invertebrate models in the study of lipid metabolism and disease are the nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans* and fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster*. This paper explores the background, advances but also limitations of the nematode system and highlights examples of the more prominent phenotypic, genetic and genomic applications. Finally, a brief overview is given to summarize how other invertebrate models have been used to investigate the intrinsic and overarching drivers of fat metabolism and to uncover their potential for drug discovery and delivery screens.

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