

Cristina Odone

Cristina Odone is a journalist, novelist and broadcaster specialising in the relationship between society, families and faith. She is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Policy Studies and is a former editor of the Catholic Herald and deputy editor of the New Statesman. She is married and lives in west London with her husband, two stepsons and a daughter. She has recently launched the website [freefaith.com](#).

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Why should fat people take precedence over the elderly in the NHS?

By [Cristina Odone](#) | [Politics](#) | Last updated: March 26th, 2012

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Why should these porkers push elderly people out of the way? (Photo: Alamy)

Even the most sentimental champions of the NHS recognise its dark side. Given that its Chief Executive Sir David Nicholson has demanded a **£20 billion efficiency saving** if the NHS is to survive, and that demographic changes mean millions more elderly people will rely on its services (and space), the NHS can only do one thing: ration.

If rationing is acceptable, though, scapegoating is not. And too much evidence points to the elderly being the scapegoats in the battle to save the NHS. As the Telegraph reports today, elderly patients are being denied the best cancer care. The figures are alarming: lack of treatment is contributing to 14,000 deaths a year among the over-75s. Men and women are dying prematurely each year because their diseases are diagnosed later and less likely to be operated on.

Already the elderly are short-changed when it comes to nurses' time.

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Nurses in hospitals plead to being too busy to look after their charges decently, and so elderly patients frequently suffer dehydration, malnutrition and a lack of hygiene.

This treatment is cruel and unfair: age comes to us all, and is not the result of lifestyle choices. There are plenty of conditions, though, that are the direct result of bad habits, poor diet, and the wrong choices. These conditions range from obesity and diabetes to smoking-related diseases like emphysema. If a 20-stone, 30-something woman comes into hospital with a bad diabetic attack, does she deserve to be at the front of the queue or the back? She has chosen to stuff her face with Mars bars and Coke, and is now suffering the consequences of her choice. She cannot claim ignorance of the dangers of her diet: [the Government has carpet-bombed us](#) with health advice, from schools to GP practices. Class no longer regulates access to healthy living: everyone who can watch the telly, let alone read the magazines, knows that a high-fat diet will make you look bad and feel worse.

Does the obese 30-something lay claim to NHS services and a hospital bed when this means thousands of others will have to do without?

The septuagenarian who develops breast cancer has done nothing wrong – except grow old. The NHS has to consider that there are deserving cases and undeserving ones. Age should not be a barrier to optimum care; but bad habits should be.

Tags: [elderly care](#), [NHS](#), [nurses](#), [Si David Nicholson](#)

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Michael Grace
0 seconds ago

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You are so right. In the USA... we have ObamaCare... which may be shot down by the supreme court.

Fat people are a total menace. Pigs...

ObamaEatsBuckwheat
2 minutes ago

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Report

Shock. You mean the socialist worker's paradise where the government can force you to cough up your money for their 'insurance' was a lie? Next you'll be telling us bears defecate in the woods and the pope is a papist. [Hint, because you treat A like dirt, doesn't give you the right to treat B like dirt, especially if both A and B were forced throughout their lives to cough up money for it.]

I guess if Churchill had had 'issues' they should have just left the fat man to die, because he shouldn't have stuffed his fat face or drunk or smoked.

Thought police, diet police, light bulb police. What next?



CATHERINE
21 minutes ago

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OH SKINNY PEOPLE SHUT UP - HOW BOUT WE LOOK AND SEE WHAT DISEASES YOUR FAMILY TREE HAS -- HMNNN????

see you 'perfect' people have heart and cancer problems THAT ARE HERITARY AND DO WE EXCLUDE THOSE????

how BOUT YOU BIG WINE DRINKERS, OR YOU SMOKERS.....SEE THE SLIPPERY SLOPE, MAYBE GUN OWNERS SHOULDN'T TAKE PRECEDENT OVER PRIESTS,

YOU LEFTWING NUTS FORGET THAT WHEN YOU TURN US INTO HITLER'S GERMANY - AHM AHM

YOU CAN'T GUARANTEE YOU WILL BE ONE OF THE CHOSEN ONES.....WHAT IF YOU GET CANCER AND THE DRUGS 'MAKE YOU FAT'--- GOODBYE BABE.....

COMMUNISTS RATION AND THIS IS WHY AMERICA IS DONE WITH BARACK'S SOCIALISM - WE HAD THE BEST HEALTHCARE ON THE PLANET AND WE WOULD RATHER HAVE IT THAN OBAMA-HE BELONGS IN CHICAGO



cufflink
3 minutes ago

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You are coming across a little bit mad.

And I don't mean angry.



NoYfB
39 minutes ago

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This debate is not about fat people albeit they have been used as an example. Unhealthy life style choices certainly contribute to long term care issues and there is an associated cost burden on the NHS. The issue with the elderly is that that many no longer pay taxes, live much longer, are ill more often and spend more time in acute care. This,however,is no excuse for denying the elderly a basic right of healthcare. Ultimately, it all comes down to whether you believe that the NHS should provide equal healthcare to all or should be provided on a demographic basis. So do you want to pay more taxes to ensure healthcare for the elderly or not? Simple!



CATHERINE
18 minutes ago

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HISTORY WILL TELL US SOCIALISTS LIKE BARRY DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THE ELDERLY - THEY WANT THE YOUNG - THEY SPEND THEIR WHOLE WAD ON THE 'KIDS' WHO DON'T KNOW THEIR HISTORY.....OBAMACARE IS LIKE MILITARY MEDICINE WITH A HITLER OVERSIGHT.....BARRY HAS LOOKED THE ELDERLY IN THE FACE AND SAID HE COULDN'T GUARANTEE THEIR SS CHECKS AND HE TOOK 600 BILLION OUT OF MEDICARE TO PAY FOR OBAMACARE

THAT WAS ALMOST WHAT THE ENTIRE IRAQ WAR COST - MY LIBERALS CARRIED 'KILL BUSH' SIGNS OVER THAT COST AND ARE SILENT WHEN IT IS STOLEN FROM THE ELDERLY TO PAY FOR OBAMA'S MISTAKES



Vickie
39 minutes ago

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Wow! Only the healthy should be at the front of the line... If you're sick you have definitely made bad choices somewhere. Throw the sick at the back of the line, that way, you take care of over population and give the medical profession a well deserved vacation.

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Please, everyone in DC, wake up! Read this article and these comments before our country starts down this same road!



[cufflink](#)
40 minutes ago

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Another rubbish article from someone who has no valid background to comment on this sort of topic.

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However, that said. There are too many obesity apologists on this site.

Obesity is due to eating too much. It is not an unavoidable condition inflicted on poor unsuspecting innocents.



[shep5557](#)
53 minutes ago

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I can always count on you Brits to cover the issues thoroughly with humor, or should I say humour. Standing from your view point outside of the so called free market medical system, you have pointed out that if we adopt a socialist type of system, we can expect to incur the wrath of our neighbor who will think they know better than us about who deserves priority in healthcare services. In other words the mob, or whoever has the most influence over the mob, will dictate who gets priority healthcare services. Today it's the old cancerous people who are denied. Tomorrow it may be the over weight. The day after, perhaps the young malformed. Who knows? One thing is for sure. You are never without some sort of controversy. Sensationalism is one of your favorite past times, and soon to become one of ours. Damn, I meant favourite. Excuse us dear cousins while we devolve into the tribal mentality where we can't decide who knows more about our or our childrens health, the government or us.

[Report](#)

Signed: No longer the beacon of freedom. The flame is too hot! Someone help us!!

P.S. Peter2000: You are one funny dude.



[nativo13](#)
55 minutes ago

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I read that Ms Osborn married in her 40s and decided to have a child. The chances of a birth defect dramatically increase with age, just ask Sarah Palin or Rick Santorum who each have genetically defective children born in their older years. Since that is a behavioral choice, the NHS ought to deny service to such people in order to discourage the unhealthy and expensive consequences. The sanctimonious Ms Osborn has no right to condemn anyone about risky behavioral choices; and since her risky choice involved an innocent child, Ms Osborn ought to be put in jail. That's what I would argue if I were using Ms Osborn's method of reasoning. She is a silly person.



[theophany](#)
Today 03:58 AM

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The government health services should give precedence to the treatment of obesity-related illnesses as long as the government keeps pushing the idea that carbohydrates should be a primary part of each meal, that fats should be avoided, that animal fat in particular should be avoided, and that the "calories in/calories out" myth is anything but an inaccurate, simplistic picture of what actually goes on in the body in order to blame all fat people for their own predicament due to gluttony and sloth.

[TruthDetector](#)
Today 03:57 AM

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Close, but no cigar.

Fat elderly folks should be at the head of the queue, followed by the exclusively elderly OR the exclusively fat...



Dennis Germain
Today 03:57 AM

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Fat is the new Jew. I was fat as a kid, my brother was not. "Slim" and I ate the same food but "Slim" sat around all day reading books while I played sports. Nobody use to complain about fat people, tease yes, complain no, just like the Jew. Now there is a problem with money for health care so lets find someone to blame, I know lets blame it on the new Jew, Fat people. When we die young it will save money.



maxtor51
Today 03:55 AM

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i have never seen the like of fat women in the town where i live and most probably have health problems due to it and have seen them shopping for food and you can plainly see why there are that way. i was in a popular shopping center one day and i only seen 2 women that could be considered not overweight or obese. most of it is due to their lifestyle of eating and eating and eating. out of probably 200 women i would venture to say there were 2 that were not overweight. i wish i could have filmed and documented it cause it was astonishing to say the least. these are the people that taxes the health system with their weight problem when they could lose that weight and straighten out a lot of health problems. some were so obese that they couldnt walk the length of an aisle without stopping and trying to get their breath. maybe some has legitimate excuses but most could have been avoided early in their life if they would take personal responsibility for their eating habits or lack thereof. very few men i witnessed in the same store was overweight. it seems like a "thing to do" nowadays for women....in my eyes, it is not attractive in any, way, form, or fashion.



Wally Hyatt Namer
Today 03:52 AM

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Let me see, you gave up your freedom but, now you want it back? That is what the que is all about. Now you must live (or die) by it!



orangepekoe
Today 03:34 AM

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Answer - they shouldn't but they do because they've been told by those who make a living out of them that they've got an illness when in fact they've just got BIG GOBS!



ghostdance
Today 03:19 AM

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We should just deny people healthcare because we disagree with their lifestyle choices?

If they engage in risky behaviour, then we should deny them care?

How about denying them care or moving them to the back of the line if they were stupid enough to get pregnant and have babies because they didn't use protection. Sex is risky behaviour and a lifestyle choice Cristina.

How about denying people who get AIDS healthcare because they engaged in risky behaviour (only those who acquire it through sexual contact)... again it's sex which is a chosen behaviour.

Would you be for that Cristina?

I'm guessin' you wouldn't.



Blanca Nieve
Today 03:12 AM

And state-sponsored "elder-euthanasia" through benign neglect HAS ALREADY HIT THE USA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM! As I write this, hospitals across the US have been notified by DHS that certain procedures ARE NO LONGER LEGALLY AVAILABLE TO ELDERLY PATIENTS. THIS outrage is but the first phase of Obamacare. Remember: the main effects of Obamacare won't be felt until 2014! Furthermore, hospitals have been warned that HUGE FINES WILL BE LEVIED AGAINST HOSPITALS who go against these new state protocols! WOW! So any elderly person, WHO HAS PRIVATELY PAID FOR INSURANCE PREMIUMS OVER MANY DECADES, will be categorically denied any procedure deemed NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE FOR THE ELDERLY, BY A NON-MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL, IDIOTIC, BUREAUCRAT! Yet, some 20-something, fat-cow, breeder, welfare-sow, will be able to get ANY and EVERY procedure she desires; including FREE pre-natal and post-natal care for her "criminal-in-training" offspring! In San Francisco, a "gender-confused" city worker can get a FREE sex change,--at the cost of the taxpayer! WHAT? And the elderly are denied even the most rudimentary care...It is absolutely despicable!

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peter2000
Today 02:57 AM

Of course fat people should have precedence. There are more of them for a start, not just in numbers but in bulk. A lot of these old people are scrawny little things looking like wringed out taffy. A lot of them drive around in dementia driven oblivion. And my grandmother for one, dribbles. No the fat should be celebrated like the Telly Tubbies are by our youth. Our literary history is full of fat heros... Mr Pickwick. Falstaff. Our Church was established by King Henry 8th and apart from a distressing habit of decapitating unwanted spouses (and who is kidding who, don't we all think about it..) he was a happy fat monarch. Fat people are funnier.. I for one laugh at them more and they make the rest of us normal. If there were no fat people we wouldn't be so proud of a ten dress size. So what if we have to pay a bit for the diabetic, they don't do anyone any harm and the quick death of the coronary is preferable after a lifetime of tim tams to the sad slow cancer crawl to the door. No, the fat and flabby will always be with us, you only have to look at my wife... Celebrate them whilst we have them. Look at all those women who refused dessert on the last night of the Titanic saying " No I am banting!" Come on girls, you don't get good cleavage with a B cup size ten dress. Next time one comes rumbling through the door, offer them a seat and amaze yourself at where the fat folds... We often take bets.

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Ben Diamante
Today 02:52 AM

Author says "everyone... knows that a high-fat diet will make you look bad and feel worse"

Actually, a high fat diet is not really all that bad. It's a high CARB diet that will make you look and feel bad.

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docky
Today 02:33 AM

Crazy idea..... fat people should buy policies that do diabetic care/dietary interventions well.....

skiers should buy policies that are strong in orthopaedics.....

people with a family history of colon cancer should buy a policy that covers early and frequent colonoscopy....

trusting govt to make the most complex economic model, ever, a simple cover all

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for everyone..... makes sense only to the most delusional of liberals.



buyitcheap
Today 02:29 AM

They shouldn't take precedence. Age isn't a behavioral/discipline issue, overeating is. Stop after the first piece of pie, chubbies.

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Bold
Today 02:19 AM

Seriously lets get truthful here honey -- what your hateful bigoted diatribe means is....lets get rid of the fatties too! We already know that in the utilitarian mentality, old folks are already out--why not take those who lack self control next and god forbid, we even think about keeping the disabled. If you are old, imperfect, or ugly, be gone!! We are seeing that in the US--yet the seniors haven't caught on--that Obama and his demonic left wing minions prefer spending all their health care dollars on welfare sheep "the poor" as they belovedly call them. The poor who are so irresponsible they cant even be held responsible for getting themselves to a doctors appointment so we will give them the cab fair too. How is a poor person (someone who often made poor choices or lacked self control) any more deserving of free healthcare than another person?

This is the problem with a health system "quota" that determines who gets what healthcare. It is evil. It is based on prejudices. It is based on a mindset that says one person is more valuable than another (this is why I quit likeing Michael J Fox-- because he thought some poor dead child should provide his cure). GOD SAYS (and you should know this as a Catholic) HE views every single one of us as precious becasue we are made in His image. Imperfect, old and lacking self control. Who says fatty got that way from MilkyWays? You have no idea what hormone imbalances can do. My physician, who is an out of the box thinker, believes that there is some trigger that causes a person to begin to overeate/gain weight and it is rooted in some traumatic event whether medical or emotional. I agree with that as well.

Stop buying into all the lies about the health system in the US. It is a great one and doing magnificent things every day!!! Stop giving these totalitarians what they want...which is to control all the money and the power while limiting what the rest of us get.

Also, you might want to get your priest to take a look at that BLACK HEART of yours. I am not sure that anything will cure it.

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docky
Today 02:21 AM

all goes away if we agree that you have to pay for your own care, right?

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rbblum
Today 02:09 AM

Once man deviates from the natural economic laws (of the marketplace) there will be unintended consequences based on the imposition of subjectivity.

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@CyborgDave you are correct sir! it's reasons like this: <http://t.co/h5oHV81d>



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Moral? You can cure fat, but not being old? Yay for government healthcare! <http://t.co/893AmW0D>



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#obamacare supporters should read this article about #UK #healthcare <http://t.co/lbtLjmTZ> #tcot #teaparty #p2 #p21 #tlot #ocra #gop



BiffPendragon on [twitter](#)
Today 01:57 AM

#ILlikeObamaCare because our government will kill all the fat people. <http://t.co/KwBf8fZw> #ILoveObamaCare



onmessageinc on [twitter](#)
Today 01:50 AM

If you doubt #obamacare would lead to rationing, chk out England, where the fat get picked over the old.
<http://t.co/XMRjUkns> #yourenext



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