High Prevalence of Obesity Among the Poor in Mexico

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Comment

There is a large prevalence of overweight and obesity in low-income adults in Mexico, and this prevalence is increasing with time. Additionally, there is a high prevalence of overweight and obesity in children in Mexico.

Methods

Two national surveys were conducted in Mexico. The first survey was conducted in 2000 in 45,260 adults as part of the National Health and Nutrition Survey, which was designed to be representative of the poorest (income <20th percentile) rural (towns with <2500 inhabitants) communities in 7 Mexican states. The second survey was conducted in 2003 in 12,873 adults as part of the Social Welfare Survey, which was designed to be representative of the poorest segment of the Mexican population, and the sampling method was the same as in the 2000 survey.

Results

In the 2003 sample, the combined prevalence of overweight and obesity was 33.1% among adults, with 22.5% being overweight and 10.6% being obese. In the 2000 sample, the combined prevalence of overweight and obesity was 26.0% among adults, with 17.5% being overweight and 8.5% being obese. The difference between the two surveys was statistically significant (P < .01).

Conclusions

There is a high prevalence of overweight and obesity in the poorest segment of the Mexican population, and the prevalence of overweight and obesity in children is also high. This highlights the need for targeted interventions to address this public health problem.