TOWARDS AN ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DIETS: SHARING THE MEXICAN EXPERIENCE

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Obesity prevention in Latin America

- **Challenges**
  - Scarce resources to invest in obesity prevention
  - Double-burden of malnutrition
  - Interference of industry in health policy and regulatory efforts

- **Opportunities**
  - No need for expensive technology
  - NCDs: increasing political visibility
  - LA region well communicated/integrated (domino effect)
  - Solutions can be replicated in low and middle income countries
Government reductions in expenditure for NCDs in México (2013-2018)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total health budget (million USD)</th>
<th>NCD Prevention &amp; control (million USD)</th>
<th>% NCD Prevention &amp; control of total health budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8,600</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>6,900</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* USD (adjusted for inflation)  
Latin America: successful initiatives in diverse countries

- **Soda tax**: Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, Peru
- **Front-of-pack warning labels**: Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Perú
- **School healthy eating guidelines**: Brazil, Colombia
- **Marketing restrictions**: Chile, Brazil, Uruguay
- **Active transportation and physical activity**: Colombia, Brazil, Mexico

Mostly working on influencers for:

- External food environments (prices, marketing and regulation, quality, availability, accessibility)
- Child nutritional status (nutritional requirements, particularly water and sanitation)
- Food provider behavior (education and literacy)
- Personal food environments (accessibility, affordability and convenience)
Evaluation of soda tax policy in Mexico: sustained reduction in SSBs purchases

- 2014: purchases ↓ 5.5%
- 2015: reductions reached 9.7%
- 2014-2015: average ↓ 7.6%
  - -5.1 Liters/capita/year

By M. Annette Colchero, Juan Rivera-Esmerado, Barry M. Popkin, and Shu Wen Ng

In Mexico, Evidence Of Sustained Consumer Response Two Years After Implementing A Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax

Colchero MA, et al. Health Affairs. 2017; 36(3)
Progress in marketing to children regulation in Chile:

Product in Chile:

- Use of cartoon characters is prohibited ✅
- Clear, visible warning labels ✅
- Misleading front of pack labeling system (GDAs) ❌
- GDA- sugar based on 92g a day ❌

Product in México:

- Use of cartoon characters ❌
- Gifts ❌
- Endorsed by sports leagues ❌
Latin America: Characterization of the obesogenic environment

INSP studies funded by UNICEF exploring components of the obesogenic environment in Latin America:

2016: Front-of-pack labeling: Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico
2018: Point-of-purchase marketing: Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico
Characterization of food/beverage promotion directed at children

Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Mexico*

General Objective:

• Identify how marketing strategies for food and beverages are targeted to children and how their parents contribute to purchases of unhealthy food

Review

Monitoring the availability of healthy and unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages in community and consumer retail food environments globally

C. Ni Mhurchu1, S. Vandevijvere2, W. Waterlander3, L. E. Thornton4, B. Kelly4, A. J. Cameron5, W. Snowdon6,7 and B. Swinburn8,9 for INFORMAS*

Funded by:

unicef
Segmentation of the self-service markets in Latin America

- **Hypermarkets**
  - Soriana
  - Walmart

- **Supermarkets**
  - H-E-B

- **Bodegas**
  - Mercado Soriana
  - Bodega Aurrera

Funded by: Unicef
Retail Food Environments in Latin America

High availability of unhealthy food marketing to children at point-of-purchase

Targeting children with product placement

IMAGES

PRICE DISCOUNTS

CARTOON CHARACTERS ON PACKAGES

GIFTS

INCENTIVES
Healthy foods are not as expensive as consumers think...

Mango 1kg - $1.35 USD

Mandarin 2kg - $1 USD
Healthy foods are not as expensive as consumers think…

4 kilograms of watermelon costs $1.04 USD
Healthy foods are not as expensive as consumers think…

3 kilograms of cactus fruit cost < $1.00 USD
Healthy foods are not as expensive as consumers think…

2 kilogram of tomatoes cost $1.00 USD
Low income supermarket in Mexico

Gifts and price incentives:
- Coke bucket with 6 liters of soda: $1.3 USD
high income super market in Mexico
Main *product promotions* within children’s reach*

Based on 720 interviews in five Latin American Countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>Promotion Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet snacks</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salty snacks</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain water</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastries, cakes and cookies</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar-sweetened beverages</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast cereals</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Less than 150 cms.

Barquera S, Tolentino ML, Fricke E, et al. 2018
SSBs within children’s reach* by type of store

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Store Type</th>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Plain Water</th>
<th>Sugar-sweetened beverages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discount store (small shop)</td>
<td>low income</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>middle income</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high income</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on 720 interviews in five Latin American Countries.

* Less than 150 cms.

Barquera S, Tolentino ML, Fricke E, et al. 2018
Products that interviewees bought at stores without prior planning.

Barquera S, Tolentino ML, Fricke E, et al. 2018

* Less than 150 cms.
How can we help consumers make healthier food choices?

CHILE:
WARNING LABEL SYSTEM
- EASY TO UNDERSTAND
- DEVELOPED BY ACADEMIC EXPERTS

MEXICO:
GDA LABEL SYSTEM
- MISLEADING
- DEVELOPED BY FOOD INDUSTRY
Motives for buying industrialized foods and beverages

Flavor, Nutrient content and Price most frequent responses

Flavor: 74
Nutrient content: 71.2
Price: 66.6
Promotion: 55.1
Familiar: 51.1
Easy preparation: 37.7
Diet: 31.34
Society: 18.1

How many consumers can interpret the GDA symbols?
How many consumers can interpret the Chilean FOP symbol?
Evidence showing por results of the GDA labeling system

- 2010: Study by INSP: GDA label is not well understood by university nutrition students in Mexico
- 2016: Study by INSP-UNICEF: Users prefer a warning label over the GDA
- 2017: ENSANUT 2016: Only 24% of the population reads the GDA and only 13.8% understands it
How easy to understand is the FOPL information in Mexico*?

Low income, less likely to understand and use GDAs (p<0.01)

Sample size n=4057
The shopping site

- Real products available in the Mexican market
- Variety of nutritional quality
- Real cost of the products at the time
- Only the front-of-the-pack of the product was displayed
Proportion of participants correctly identifying the least healthy option


* Significantly different from GDA
No differences between TL & WL
Mexican expert group position on front-of-pack labeling

- FOPL based on national & international health recommendations, WHO, PAHO, the National Academy of Medicine, & nutritional recommendations for Mexicans from INCMNSZ.
- A conflict-of-interest free group with transparency criteria
- Coordinated nutrient profile for public policy
- A simple, understandable warming label
- FOP label ONLY for harmful ingredients
- GDA does not work; an effective system is needed

Salud Pub Mex, 2018:60;4:479-486
Government guidelines for the school environment

- Water availability
- Physical activity
- Food marketing inside schools
- Quality of food inside schools

Secretaría de Salud. Lineamientos técnicos para el expendio o distribución de alimentos y bebidas en los establecimientos de educación básica, 2010
Nutrition education in public primary school text books
School environment: accessibility of unhealthy food, lack of water fountains
Even with school regulations to limit junk food availability, food vendors outside are common, particularly in low income public schools.
Mexican Observatory for Obesity: dominated by multinational food companies

OMENT Advisory Council

Latin American region challenge: regulation to improve external food environment

Industry interference in obesity prevention policies is a major obstacle

International collaboration has been important to adopt successful experiences
Thank you!