
INTRODUCTION

Nutrition results of the Mexican National Health and Nutrition Survey 2006

Information on the nutritional status and health of a population allows us to better understand current problems related to all forms of poor nutrition, from deficiencies in macro- and micronutrients to an imbalance in the intake and expenditure of energy. An analysis of evidence on a population's nutritional status can assist the design and implementation of prevention strategies and interventions.

National nutrition surveys have been conducted in Mexico since 1988, making it possible to determine the nutritional status of the Mexican population based on national probabilistic surveys of rural and urban strata in different regions of the country. Accordingly, the National Nutrition Surveys were carried out in 1988 (ENN88) and 1999 (ENN99), and in 2006, the National Health and Nutrition Survey (ENSANUT 2006) –coordinated by the Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública– included nutritional factors as well as certain aspects of health previously studied in the National Health Surveys.

The ENSANUT 2006 is more extensive than previous surveys, covering a larger range of health problems, broadening the populations studied in previous surveys, and including state-level representative samples for certain health problems that provide useful information for decision-making on the state level.

Disseminating research results is essential in order to inform the development of health policies and programs. The results of the ENN88 and the ENN99 were disseminated by various means, in particular, through the *Salud Pública de México* (SPM) supplement, "1999 National Nutrition Survey."¹ Likewise, several important steps have been taken to disseminate the results of the ENSANUT 2006, such as publishing reports related to general results² and those relevant to nutrition,³ as well as state level results⁴ and those related to Mexico's border regions.⁵

The current issue of *SPM* is a contribution to the efforts to disseminate the ENSANUT 2006, in this case with a series of scientific articles that analyze, in detail, problems relevant to nutrition and health in Mexico, ranging from malnutrition to obesity, overweight and eating disorders. All of these articles have been subject to high technical standards and a strict peer review process, and many use information not only from the ENSANUT 2006 but also from the ENN99 and ENN88 in order to estimate tendencies over time for different nutritional problems.

This issue includes an editorial written by Mauricio Hernández Ávila that emphasizes the role of health and nutrition information in decision-making.

The issue begins with an original article by González de Cossío et al. that compares malnutrition estimates from the past two decades using various international reference standards. This work is an outstanding contribution, documenting increases in malnutrition in Mexico using new references proposed by the World Health Organization. Next, two articles are presented that describe anemia in Mexico among both children and women, and includes the magnitude of anemia as well as trends (Villalpando et al., Shamah et al.).

The ENSANUT 2006 collected information on diet from preschoolers to adults of both sexes, enabling innovative analyses in this field as well as documentation of profiles on energy and nutrient intakes for different population groups. The first of these articles (Rodríguez et al.) describes the methodology used by this survey to analyze data related to diet. Subsequent articles describe energy intake profiles for preschoolers (Mundo et al.), school children (Flores et al.), adolescents (Rodríguez et al.) and adults (Barquera et al.). Considering the importance of fruit and vegetable intakes in the nutritional transition that Mexico is experiencing, an article on fruits and vegetables intakes is also included (Ramírez et al.).

Given the increasing public health concerns in Mexico over obesity and overweight, this issue also includes a series of articles relating to the magnitude, trends and risk factors associated with these problems. Bonvecchio et al. document the trends in obesity in children between 1988 and 2006, while Barquera et al. present evidence for the magnitude of obesity and central adiposity in the adult population in 2006. Also included are various studies that explore the association between obesity and the consumption of sugared beverages (Jiménez et al.), time spent watching television and physical activity in children (Morales et al.), physical activity in adults (Gómez et al.), and participation in food-assistance programs (Cuevas-Nasu et al.). This section of original works concludes with an article on the prevalence of and factors associated with eating disorders in adolescents (Barriguete et al.).

The ENSANUT 2006 is a very large source of information, and this can also make interpreting its findings difficult. To facilitate its reading and general comprehension, this issue presents a special article on the Conclusions of the ENSANUT 2006, written by Juan Rivera Dommarco.

Mexico has a long tradition of studying nutritional and health problems. So as to recover some of the first works on these topics in Mexico, this issue includes a translation of the article by Anderson et al. on the state of nutrition and eating habits in Otomí communities in Mexico's Mezquital Valley.

Not only are nutrition and health academic fields, they also involve the participation of various actors and the management of various actions in society. Therefore, this issue includes four texts that reflect current debates in this field: a commentary on recommendations for the Mexican population regarding the consumption of beverages for a healthy life, written by

Enrique Jacoby, a note on tortilla dough enrichment by SUSTAIN and two summaries of texts, one on nutrition and poverty by Gonzalo Hernández Licona, and the other on cancer prevention by Eduardo Lazcano.

It is important to note that this volume has been printed with the unconditional support of the Instituto de Nutrición y Salud Kellogg's. We hope that this volume will contribute not only to the study of problems related to health and nutrition in Mexico and neighboring countries, but also that the evidence generated will be useful to design and implement policies and programs for the prevention of nutritional problems in Mexico and in other countries. The greatest test of research is its application in the development of concrete solutions that result in the prevention and reversal of the problems identified.

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