

News

Half of Colombians are overweight: Study

by Caitlin Trent | September 27, 2012

According to a study done by the Health Ministry, half of Colombians are overweight and are generally unhealthy.

Health Ministry official Fernando Ramirez, in conjunction with a professor from the University of Antioquia carried out a study of Colombian health. The study found that 50% of all Colombians are classified as overweight. Furthermore, 16.5% percent of that 50% are clinically obese. The study defined an overweight man as having a waist bigger than 90 centimeters and an overweight woman as having a waist over 80 centimeters.

According to Caracol Radio who interviewed Ramirez, he stated that widespread obesity “is due to bad eating habits (high in sugar, fat, flour and salt), physical inactivity and an excess of alcohol and tobacco. Across the country, the populations of all cities have obesity problems. Moreover, abdominal obesity has increased by 6% in recent years.... regions with higher rates of abdominal obesity are the coffee regions, Bogota, San Andres and Valle.”

He went on to say that the most concerning problem is in children younger than four years old, where he claims 20% of the demographic is prone to obesity.

His solution to the problem is good old-fashioned exercise and eating fruits and vegetables as well as consuming less alcohol and tobacco.

Other surprising statistics from the study:

- 1 in 2 are physically inactive
- 1 in 3 do not eat fruit daily, and 2 in 3 do not eat vegetables daily
- 1 in 8 adults smoke and 1 in 3 youth smoke

Bibliography

<https://colombiareports.com/half-of-colombians-are-overweight-study/>



(Photo: Educated Insanity)

News

Excessive advertising poses obesity risk to Colombia's youth: Study

by Wesley Tomaselli | August 5, 2013

Researchers at Bogota's Javeriana University recently found that obesity threatens Colombian children and adolescents because of excessive food advertising.

Fernando Gomez, a research scientist behind the study at Javeriana University's Department of Preventative Medicine, says that food company advertising is the culprit of obesity in youth.

His study concluded that roughly 96% of the foods advertised on children's channels on Colombian television station RCN on July 29, 2012 were unhealthy.

"The industry directs all of its efforts to the child population because children guarantee long-term consumption," Gomez told local media. "From 3 or 4 years of age, [children] start to recognize brands and will simply not change. It is very difficult for a person who is used to seeing Coca-Cola from a young age to change."

A more modern economy can be a double-edged sword. For Colombia, a rising middle class, reduced unemployment, and a strong economic base have poised the country's people for a big opportunity to push forward with development. But development can also mean an unhealthy diet. Colombia's recent round of free trade agreements also make the consumption of imports like Coca-Cola easier for consumers to access at lower prices at the long term expense of good health.

Its neighbor to the North, Mexico, is already wrestling with this problem. Coca-cola consumption in Mexico hovered around 271 8 fl. oz. beverages per capita/year in 1989. The US, Canada and Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1992 and it went into effect in 1994, in turn letting companies like Coca-cola by-pass tariffs and sell their products at a cheaper price. By 2009 consumption had climbed by 145% with 665 fl. oz. beverages per capita. That's a rate of per capita consumption growth that exceeded every other market except Malta and Panama during the period 1989-2009, according to Coca-cola.

This year, Mexico surpassed the US in obesity levels.

The International Journal of Obesity has found that the worldwide spread of the so-called “the Western diet” (a diet that is “high in saturated fats, sugar, and refined foods, but low in fiber) has meant that “the burden of obesity is shifting towards the poor.”

The World Health Organization (WHO) has reportedly found that overweight conditions and obesity have grown 25.9% in Colombia between 2005 and 2010.

WHO Colombia and WHO Geneva could not be available for comment nor confirm its findings today.

Gomez reportedly believes the root cause of obesity to be psychological. The study shows that children are unable to differentiate between advertising content and regular program content. And they are getting access, usually through social media and the internet, at an earlier age than before.

“There’s something else that’s very interesting,” said Gomez. “Children from age 8 to 12 years of age don’t understand the difference between advertising and the programs on television. They don’t have the psychological maturity to make a critical judgement of what’s behind that advertising message.”

Bibliography

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