



Tackling of unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and obesity: health effects and cost-effectiveness

As a consequence of dietary and lifestyle changes, the obesity epidemic is growing both in low- and middle-income countries. Not only does this lead to a growing burden of non-communicable diseases but it also leads to many cases of premature mortality. The aim of this report was to “present an assessment of public health strategies designed to tackle behavioural risk factors for chronic diseases that are closely linked with obesity, including aspects of diet and physical inactivity, in Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Russia and South Africa.”

Overall, a number of population-based prevention policies have been identified as potential interventions that could generate substantial health gains. These “include health information and communication strategies that improve population awareness about the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity; fiscal measures that increase the price of unhealthy food content or reduce the cost of healthy foods; and regulatory measures that improve nutritional information or restrict the marketing of unhealthy foods to children.” The study therefore recommends the combined and simultaneous implementation of a number of cost-effective policies to prevent the growth of non-communicable diseases.

Reference: Cecchini et al. Tackling of unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and obesity: health effects and cost-effectiveness. *The Lancet*. 2010;376(9754):1775–1784. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(10)61514-0