Abstract

Objective. This article presents and overview of the main results and conclusions from the Mexican National Nutrition Survey 1999 (NNS-1999) and the principal nutrition policy implications of the findings. Material and Methods. The NNS-1999 was conducted on a national probabilistic sample of almost 18 000 households, representative of the national, regional, as well as urban and rural levels in Mexico. Subjects included were children <12 years and women 12-49 years. Anthropometry, blood specimens, diet and socioeconomic information of the family were collected. Results. The principal public nutrition problems are stunting in children < 5 years of age; anemia, iron and zinc deficiency, and low serum vitamin C concentrations at all ages; and vitamin A deficiency in children. Undernutrition (stunting and micronutrient deficiencies) was generally more prevalent in the lower socioeconomic groups, in rural areas, in the south and in Indigenous population. Overweight and obesity are serious public health problems in women and are already a concern in school-age children. Conclusions. A number of programs aimed at preventing undernutrition are currently in progress; several of them were designed or modified as a result of the NNS-1999 findings. Most of them have an evaluation component that will inform adjustments or modifications of their design and implementation. However, little is being done for the prevention and control of overweight and obesity and there is limited experience on effective interventions. The design and evaluation of prevention strategies for controlling obesity in the population, based on existing evidence, is urgently needed and success stories should be brought to scale quickly to maximize impact. The English version of this paper is available too at: http://www.insp.mx/salud/index.html

Keywords

nutritional status; stunting; anemia; micronutrient deficiencies; overweight; obesity; Mexico.