Abstract
To construct a scale for assessing the quality of mealtime habits in a sample of urban Mexican adults, computing the contribution of a set of advisable and unadvisable mealtime habits. Material and Methods. We performed an exploratory factor analysis among 7,472 adults participating in the baseline assessment of the Health Workers Cohort Study, to assess the mealtime habits quality. Likelihood ratio test for difference of two probabilities and test for the difference of two means were used to identify differences between low and high categories of the Mealtime Habits Quality Scale (MHQS) across variables of interest. Results. Participants with the top quality of mealtime habits showed lower rates of overweight, obesity, abdominal obesity, and elevated body fat. They were also more adherent to a prudent dietary pattern than a western dietary pattern, and consumed more fruits and vegetables. Conclusions. Anthropometric and dietary variables differed across MHQS categories. However, further validation of the scale, and assessment of their ability to predict weight gain or related diseases are needed, using prospective and intervention studies.

Keywords
Eating behavior, assessment, evaluation, scale, indicator, adults, Mexico.