Abstract

To assess the use and understanding of the Nutritional information Panel (NIP) of pre-packaged foods by Mexican consumers. Materials and methods. A questionnaire and an understanding test for NIP were applied to adult consumers in supermarkets of six cities in the Northern, Central, and Southern regions of Mexico. Data were analyzed by frequencies and Poisson regression models. Results. Interviewed 731 consumers; 71.5% were women, mean age 33 ± 9.7 (range: 18-60), 70% completed high-school or a higher degree. In total, 17% of consumers use the NIP for making purchase decisions; 49% did not understand the NIP. Only 1.2% of consumers answered correctly the five questions of the NIP understanding test. Conclusions. The use and understanding of the NIP are low despite a high proportion self-reported reading and understanding. The lack of previous knowledge of the technical language prevents use and interpretation of NIP nutritional information for purchasing decisions.

Keywords

Consumers, food labeling, Mexico.