Objective. To estimate the association between perceived body mass index (BMI) and socioeconomic variables in adults in Mexico.

Materials and methods. We studied 32052 adults from the Mexican National Health and Nutrition Survey of 2006. We estimated BMI misperception by comparing the respondent’s weight perception (as categories of BMI) with the corresponding category according to measured weight and height. Misperception was defined as respondent’s perception of a BMI category different from their actual category. Socioeconomic status was assessed using household assets. Logistic and multinomial regression models by gender and BMI category were estimated. Results. Adult women and men highly underestimate their BMI category. We found that the probability of a correct classification was lower than the probability of getting a correct result by chance alone. Better educated and more affluent individuals are more likely to have a correct perception of their weight status, particularly among overweight adults. Conclusions. Given that a correct perception of weight has been associated with an increased search of weight control and that our results show that the studied population underestimated their BMI, interventions providing definitions and consequences of overweight and obesity and encouraging the population to monitor their weight could be beneficial.

Keywords
Weight perception, obesity, body mass index, Mexico.