Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity
Spain

This is one of the 53 country profiles covering developments in nutrition, physical activity and obesity in the WHO European Region. The full set of individual profiles and an overview report including methodology and summary can be downloaded from the WHO Regional Office for Europe website: http://www.euro.who.int/en/nutrition-country-profiles.

DEMOPGRAPHIC DATA
Total population 46 077 000
Median age (years) 40.1
Life expectancy at birth (years) female | male 83.8 | 77.2
GDP per capita (US$) 30 543.0
GDP spent on health (%) 9.5

Source: WHO Global Health Observatory Data Repository (1).

Notes. The country codes refer to the ISO 3166-1 Alpha-3 country codes. Data ranking for obesity is intentionally the same as for the overweight data. BMI: body mass index.

Monitoring and surveillance
Overweight and obesity in three age groups

Adults (18/20 years and over)
Intercountry comparable overweight and obesity estimates from 2008 (1) show that 62.0% of the adult population (≥ 20 years old) in Spain were overweight and 26.6% were obese. The prevalence of overweight was higher among men (67.7%) than women (56.6%). The proportion of men and women that were obese was 26.5% and 26.7%, respectively.

According to a nationally representative survey carried out in 2011–2012 among individuals aged 18 years or over, 53.7% were overweight and 17.0% were obese (based on self-reported weight and height). Overweight prevalence estimates for men and women were 63.1% and 44.1%, respectively. The prevalence of obesity for men and women was 18.0% and 16.0%, respectively (2). It should

PREVALENCE OF OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY (%) AMONG SPANISH ADULTS BASED ON WHO 2008 ESTIMATES

Source: WHO Global Health Observatory Data Repository (1).

PREVALENCE OF OBESITY (%)(BMI ≥30.0 KG/M²) AMONG ADULTS IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION BASED ON WHO 2008 ESTIMATES

Notes. The country codes refer to the ISO 3166-1 Alpha-3 country codes. Data ranking for obesity is intentionally the same as for the overweight data. BMI: body mass index.

Source: WHO Global Health Observatory Data Repository (1).

The Regional Office is grateful to the European Commission (EC) for its financial support for the preparation of this country profile and the development of the nutrition, obesity and physical activity database that provided the data for it.
be taken into account that these data do not allow for comparability across countries due to sampling and methodological differences.

Adulthood obesity prevalence forecasts (2010–2030) predict that in 2020, 27% of men and 19% of women will be obese. By 2030, the model predicts that 36% of men and 21% of women will be obese.¹

**Adolescents (10–19 years)**

In terms of prevalence of overweight and obesity in adolescents, up to 35% of boys and 24% of girls among 11-year-olds were overweight, according to data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey (2009/2010).² Among 13-year-olds, the corresponding figures were 30% for boys and 17% for girls, and among 15-year-olds, 23% and 14%, respectively (3).

**Children (0–9 years)**

No data are available from the WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI) 2007/2008 round. Spain, however, joined the second COSI data collection round during the school year 2009/2010. Intercountry data analysis is under way. National analyses of the Spanish COSI data revealed that 44.5% of children aged 6–9 years were overweight and 18.3% were obese (4).²

**Exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months of age**

Nationally representative data from 2011–2012 show that the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months of age was 28.5% in Spain.³

**Saturated fat intake**

According to the 2007 estimates of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the adult population in Spain consumed 10.7% of their total calorie intake from saturated fatty acids (5). According to national data from 2010, the adult population aged 18–64 years in Spain consumed 12.1% of their total calorie intake from saturated fatty acids (6). It should be taken into account that these latter, national data do not allow for comparability across countries due to sampling and other methodological differences.

---

¹ Report on modelling adulthood obesity across the WHO European Region, prepared by consultants (led by T. Marsh and colleagues) for the WHO Regional Office for Europe in 2013.

² Based on 2007 WHO growth reference.

³ WHO Regional Office for Europe grey literature from 2012 on breastfeeding.
Fruit and vegetable supply
Spain had a fruit and vegetable supply of 635 grams per capita per day, according to 2009 FAO estimates (5). According to national data from 2010, the mean consumption of fruit was 208 grams per day and the mean consumption of vegetables was 193 grams per day for adults (18–64 years) (7). It should be taken into account that the latter consumption data do not allow for comparability across countries due to sampling and other methodological differences.

Salt intake
Data from 2011 show that salt intake in Spain was 9.8 grams per day for both men and women (8).

Iodine status
According to the most recent estimates on iodine status, published in 2012, the proportion of the population with an iodine level lower than 100 µg/L was 34.8% (9, 10).

Physical inactivity
In Spain, 52.1% of the population aged 15 years and over were insufficiently active (men 47.7% and women 56.3%), according to estimates generated for 2008 by WHO (1). National data from 2011–2012 show that 41.3% of the adult population (≥ 15 years old) were sedentary (men 35.9% and women 46.6%) (2). It should be taken into account that these national data do not allow for comparability across countries due to sampling and methodological differences.

Policies and actions
The table below displays (a) monitoring and evaluation methods of salt intake in Spain; (b) the stakeholder approach toward salt reduction; and (c) the population approach in terms of labelling and consumer awareness initiatives (8).
Salt reduction initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring &amp; evaluation</th>
<th>Stakeholder approach</th>
<th>Population approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry self-reporting</td>
<td>Industry involvement</td>
<td>Brochure/Print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt content in food</td>
<td>Food reformulation</td>
<td>TV/Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt intake</td>
<td></td>
<td>Website/Software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Education/Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural change</td>
<td>20% salt reduction in</td>
<td>Health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary salt excretion</td>
<td>(24 hrs)</td>
<td>facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: ✗✗ partially implemented; ✗✗✗ fully implemented.

Source: WHO Regional Office for Europe (8).

Trans fatty acids (TFA) policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Type of legislation</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WHO Regional Office for Europe grey literature from 2012 on TFA and health, TFA policy and food industry approaches.

Marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages to children (12)

A government-sponsored code of self-regulation of the advertising of food products directed at minors and the prevention of obesity was launched in 2005 and covers 95% of TV food and beverage advertising to children (13). It includes a copy advice procedure for pre-vetting advertisements, and details relating to enforcement and monitoring bodies. In 2009, TV broadcasting companies agreed to ban advertising that does not observe the standards of the code (14).

In 2010 the Spanish Food Safety and Nutrition Agency proposed regulations to: reduce the number of advertisements aimed at young people (under the age of 18 years) between the hours of 06:00 and 22:00; prohibit gifts and rewards given with food and beverages; and prohibit any type of marketing to children in schools (15).

Article 46 of the Law on Food Safety and Nutrition (published in July 2011) provides that food advertising aimed at children aged under 15 years must follow the rules of conduct and self-regulation in order to promote healthy habits and prevent obesity (16). Article 40.7 of this Law provides that schools are protected areas as regards advertising and promotional campaigns, and that any marketing activities relating to nutrition or healthy habits must be authorized, based on the criteria established by the education and health authorities.

Physical activity (PA), national policy documents and action plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existence of national “sport for all” policy and/or national “sport for all” implementation programme</td>
<td>Existence of specific scheme or programme for community interventions to promote PA in the elderly</td>
<td>Counselling on PA as part of primary health care activities</td>
<td>Mandatory physical education in primary and secondary schools</td>
<td>Inclusion of PA in general teaching training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National or subnational schemes promoting active travel to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Existence of an incentive scheme for companies or employees to promote active travel to work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Clearly stated in a policy document, partially implemented or enforced. ✗ Clearly stated in a policy document, entirely implemented and enforced.

Source: country reporting template on Spain from 2009 developed in the context of a WHO/EC project on monitoring progress on improving nutrition and PA and preventing obesity in the European Union (EU).

Leadership, partnerships and professional networks on health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existence of national coordination mechanism on HEPA promotion</th>
<th>Leading institution</th>
<th>Participating bodies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ 2001</td>
<td>Spanish Food Safety and Nutrition Agency (Ministry of Health and Social Policy)</td>
<td>Government departments on health, agriculture, food, consumer affairs, sport, education and research, social welfare; academia; civil society; communities (regional councils); private sector; media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ 1990</td>
<td>High Council for Sports</td>
<td>Government departments on sport, health, urban planning, education, transport, social welfare, research; communities (regional councils); private sector; media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: country reporting template on Spain from 2009 developed in the context of a WHO/EC project on monitoring progress on improving nutrition and PA and preventing obesity in the EU.
PA recommendations, goals and surveillance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existence of national recommendation on HEPA</th>
<th>Target groups addressed by national HEPA policy</th>
<th>PA included in the national health monitoring system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: country reporting template on Spain from 2009 developed in the context of a WHO/EC project on monitoring progress on improving nutrition and PA and preventing obesity in the EU.

References