

Case Study: Diabetes in Mexico

Diabetes in Mexico

Mexico's population is the second most overweight in the world and Type 2 diabetes is now the leading cause of death, according to the Pan American Health Organization. More than 71% of women, 66% of men, and 25% of children are considered to be overweight based on the latest national surveys by the Ministry of Health. This public health issue is largely due to the consumption of inexpensive, easily accessible foods that are high in fat and sugar, as well as limited knowledge about healthy eating habits and the importance of exercise among marginalized populations. Fortunately, studies have shown that cardiovascular diseases and Type 2 diabetes can be prevented through a range of cost-effective interventions such as changes in diet and lifestyle, screening for risk, and early treatment.

About IMIFAP

Founded in 1985, IMIFAP (Instituto Mexico de Investigación de Familia y Población) is committed to alleviating poverty, improving quality of life, and enabling individuals to take control of their own health, productivity, and lives. Its programs cover a wide range of topics, from public health concerns including diabetes, HIV/AIDS, violence, cancer, and substance abuse, to school performance, life skills training, parenting, gender issues, and microenterprise development.



IMIFAP's rigorous process comprises formative research, program development, pilot testing, dissemination, advocacy, evaluation and scaling up. It has developed over 40 programs, which have improved the lives of more than 19 million people in Mexico, 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries, the U.S., Greece, and Uzbekistan.

Diabetes Prevention Program

IMIFAP is working to help reduce the incidence of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases through educational programs that focus on the acquisition of health knowledge and the development of life skills in marginalized communities of Mexico. IMIFAP's diabetes program educates adults, children, and health care professionals about these diseases and helps them to acquire knowledge about preventative behaviors. Parents are taught how to prevent obesity and diabetes in their children, and medical professionals learn how to educate their patients about the risks and prevention strategies.

To date, IMIFAP has educated over 9,500 people on diabetes prevention. Participants have demonstrated a positive change in their dietary habits, including decreased consumption of fatty foods, increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, and increased physical activity.

Spotlight: Mexico– U.S. Border Region

The Mexico – U.S. border region has among highest prevalence of cardiovascular disease, obesity, and diabetes in Mexico, with 90% of residents reported to be overweight or obese. To address this issue, IMIFAP provided educational workshops on these diseases for community members and health professionals in 10 cities, which were developed in collaboration with the Mexican Ministry of Health.