



Key figures

58% of adults in Latin America and the Caribbean are estimated to be overweight (compared to a global average of 34%) and 23% are obese.

In Chile almost **25%** of 6 - 7 year old children are obese and **67%** of people aged 15 years and over are overweight or obese.

Mexico has the second highest proportion of obese people in the world (after the US): **70%** of Mexican adults are overweight and over 30% are obese.

The economic impact of obesity in Brazil is estimated at **2.4%** of GDP

What is the issue?

There are more obese than underweight people in every region of the world except for parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. In Latin America, overweight and obesity have risen significantly in the last few decades due to:

- increasing urbanisation
- less manual work
- access to processed food
- less physically active lifestyles and more screen-based activity

What research did the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life do in relation to obesity in Latin America?

In November 2016 the Institute held a round-table 'Dialogue' with experts from Mexico, Brazil and Chile to understand better:

- what is 'obesity'?
- what are the social and economic costs of obesity and where are they seen?
- what does 'obesity' mean in Latin America?
- what is the difference between adult obesity and child obesity?
- what are the responsibilities and successes of the public, private and NGO sectors?
- what are the most significant risks and opportunities?
- what should be done?

What did we learn?

Obesity is an 'epidemic' in Latin America and the main challenges are:

- a lack of perception and awareness among the general population
- easy access to highly processed food and drink combined with targeted marketing
- inadequate access to nutritious food and drink among the less educated and lower income population
- inadequate governance and a lack of cross-sector collaboration
- growing risks concerning transparency and the perceived integrity of stakeholders such as researchers

Find out more by reading the full report *The social and economic costs of obesity in Latin America: a call to action* (also available in Spanish) **here**.

About the Institute

As an in-house 'think-tank', the Sodexo Institute for Quality of Life is inspired by Sodexo's deeply held conviction that improving Quality of Life leads to the progress of individuals and contributes to the performance of organisations. Its role is to gather and develop insight to help Sodexo understand better what are the levers of Quality of Life.

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