Sustainable healthy diets: Why are they so crucial after COVID-19?

Juan Rivera Dommarco

Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública (Mexico)
It is urgent to reconsider our food system

- In 2050 we will need to feed over 9 billion people
- Some environmental systems are already beyond safe boundaries
- It is urgent to reconsider what foods should we eat and how should we produce them
- The question addressed by EAT-Lancet:

¿How can we feed over 9 billion people in 2050 with a healthy diet that simultaneously will ensure the susteniability of our planet?
Why are sustainable diets so crucial after COVID-19?

Meta-analysis

Obesity is associated with:
- 46% ↑ risk of a positive COVID-19 test
- 113% ↑ risk of hospitalization
- 74% ↑ risk of Intensive Care need
- 48% ↑ risk of death

Our Study in Mexico

We have documented and increase in severe COVID-19 risk associated with:
- Obesity ↑ 43%
- Diabetes ↑ 87%
- Hipertension ↑ 77%


• The COVID-19 pandemic is the result of the way in which humans intract with ecosystems:
  - Our interference in niches of wild species, the trafficking, distribution and use of this species, conditions the spread of diseases, such as that caused by SARS-CoV-2, from animals to humans
  - Also, land conversion to agriculture and built environments interferes with niches of wild species
EAT-Lancet Commission healthy and sustainable diet (g/day) for 2500 Kcal/day

- Vegetables 300g (200-600)
- Fruits 200g (100-300)
- Whole grains 230g
- Whole milk or equivalent 250g (0-500)
- Animal Source Protein 84g
- Plant Source Protein 125g
- Legumes 75g (0-100)
- Nuts 50g (0-75)
- Added Fats 52g (Unsaturated 40g)
- Added Sugars < 31g

Red Meat 14g (0-28)
Poultry 29g (0-58)
Eggs 13g (0-25)
Fish 28g (0-100)
What changes are required in the average diet of the Mexican population?

- Substantial increase of vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts or seeds and whole grains (except whole grains in rural areas)
- Mixed recommendations for the intake of milk and dairy
  - Increase in Rural population
  - Reduction in urban population
- Substantial reduction in added sugars, refined grains, processed meat and red meat
- Reduce food waste
Intake from food groups (g/day) by Mexican adults relative to the Mexican healthy reference diet

Toward a healthy and sustainable diet in Mexico: where are we and how can we move forward?

Anali Castellanos-Gutiérrez,1 Tania G Sánchez-Pimienta,1 Carolina Batis,1 Walter Willett,2 and Juan A Rivera3

Intake from food groups (g/day) by Mexican adults relative to the Mexican healthy reference diet

- High-Fiber grains
- Refined cereals w/o excess sugar
- Cereals with excess sugar or saturated fat
- Tubers or starchy Vegetables
- Vegetables and fruits
- Dairy foods
- Dairy foods with excess sugar
- Animal source protein
- Vegetable source protein
- Added fats
- Added sugars

Dieta basada en 1947 kcal

Sugar sweetened beverages

Recomendación

Consumo promedio

Subestimation

Energía (Kcal)

Mexican healthy diet

Average dietary intake

Sugar sweetened beverages
Average cost (MXN$) per capita per day of current Mexican diet vs a Mexican Healthy and sustainable diet

## Examples of potential policies to promote a healthy diet in Mexico

- **Substantial increase of vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts or seeds and whole grains**

- **Mixed recommendations for the intake of milk**

- **Substantial reduction in added sugars, refined grains, processed meat and red meat**

- **Reduce food waste**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shift agricultural subsidies to these foods*</td>
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<td>Increase availability in underserved rural areas*</td>
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<td>Prioritize these foods for government procurement</td>
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<td>Healthy foods in school feeding programs (partially implemented)*</td>
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<td>Target subsidized milk (currently in urban areas) to rural communities*</td>
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<td>Double the rate of current taxes to SSB´s and junk food*</td>
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<td>Use tax revenues to ensure drinking water in underserved communities</td>
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<td>Front of Pack warning labels of unhealthy food *</td>
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<td>Marketing restrictions to children*</td>
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<td>Food standards for schools*</td>
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<td>Implementation of food waste management and education on food purchases planning and storage</td>
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* Policies are already in place but require modifications
Spaces that promote healthy eating and physical activity
- Include healthy and sustainable eating and physical activity in school curricula
- Strengthen the design and implementation of school standards related to a healthy food environment
- Ensure clean drinking water in all schools
- Promote physical activity

“No single action alone is enough to solve the obesity epidemic. It is the sum of the effects of several policy actions that will result in Obesity prevention and control”
Thank you

Juan Rivera Dommarco

@RiveraDommarco

Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública (Mexico)

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