

Consumption of ultra-processed food and its association with obesity in Chilean university students: A multi-center study: Ultra-processed food and obesity in Chilean university students

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Abstract

Objective: To explore the associations between the consumption of three categories of ultra-processed food (sugary beverages, sweet, and salty snacks) and body mass index (BMI) among Chilean university students. **Methods:** We conducted a multi-center, descriptive study among 2,039 students from 6 Chilean universities. Food consumption was surveyed using a validate food survey. That height and body weight were objectively measured to calculate BMI for determining weight status, and also, tobacco use and physical activity were measured. **Results:** An intake equal to or higher than 1 serving of sugary beverage a day was associated with greater odds of obesity in university students (OR:1.32 [95% CI: 1.00, 1.74]), 2 servings/day (OR: 1.30 [95% CI: 1.04, 1.50]), and 3 servings/day (OR: 1.39 [95% CI: 1.05, 1.80]). Neither consumption of sweet nor salty snacks (≥ 1 servings/day) related to differential odds of obesity: (OR: 0.83 [95% CI: 0.42, 1.64]) and (OR: 1.79 [95% CI: 0.93, 3.41]), respectively. **Conclusion:** In a sample of Chilean university students, consumption of sugary beverages, and not consumption of sweet or salty snacks, was associated with obesity. © 2021 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

Author keywords

Obesity; snacks; sugary beverages; ultra-processed; university students