

# ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION AND UNHEALTHY EATING PATTERNS IN ZEMPOALA, HIDALGO, MEXICO.

## Abstract

Socio-economics and nutrition cause dietary decisions and have a notable impact on public health.

**Objective:** To determine the association between the economic situation and unhealthy eating patterns in the community of Zempoala, Hidalgo. **Methodology:** A cross-analytical study was conducted, where data on the socio-economic situation of each household was collected using a validated instrument, which evaluates the economic perception between income and obtaining basic needs. In addition, a food frequency analysis was performed in Stata 16 to determine if there is an association between income and satisfaction of basic needs. **Results:**

Logistic regression analysis was performed for the association between two indexes: non-recommended foods (NRF) and economic impact on diet (EID). An association was detected with the negative index (EID) OR=4.6, CI, 90% 2.1-3.7,  $p < 0.05$ . **Conclusion.** Individuals with a negative IED index are 4.6 times more likely to consume unhealthy foods. It is important to address economic problems and lifestyles to improve healthy eating, especially in vulnerable

people. This study provides guidelines on the importance of addressing economic problems to modify dietary habits toward the promotion of healthier eating. It is crucial to continue researching strategies that improve access to healthy foods and promote a balanced diet, especially in unfavorable socioeconomic contexts.

**Keywords:** healthier eating, non-recommended foods, economic impact on diet, eating patterns, socioeconomic situation.

## Introduction

The socio-economic situation and unhealthy eating patterns is a major public health issue [1,2], which affects communities close to urban territories such as Zempoala. Economic resources can exert a significant influence on dietary decisions and consequently impact health [1-3]. In this study,

wefocusedoninvestigatingtheeconomicimpactonthefrequencyofunhealthyfoodconsumption in thispopulation.

## **Objectives**

To determine theassociationbetweeneconomic status and unhealthyeatingpatterns in thecommunityof Zempoala, Hidalgo.

1. Toanalyzetheassociationbetweeneconomic status and unhealthyeatingpatterns.
2. To describe thefrequencyofconsumptionofunhealthyfoods in thecommunity.
3. To identifytheinfluenceofeconomicfactorsontheconsumptionofhealthyfoods.

## **Methodology**

A cross-sectional-analyticalstudywascarriedout, where data ontheeconomic status ofeachhouseholdwerecollectedusing a validatedinstrument, whichevaluates theeconomicperceptionbetweenincome and satisfactionofbasicneeds. In addition, thefrequencyoffoodconsumptionwasrecorded, as well as thedifficultiesexperiencedwhenacquiringfood. The Stata.16 programwasusedto determine theassociationbetweeneconomicsituation and eatinghabits.

Finite populationcalculationwasusedwith a sampleof 68 households, considering a confidencelevelof 90% and a marginof error of 10%. In total, 70 peoplefromthecommunitywereinterviewed (44% men and 56% women) randomlyselected.

## **Results**

A logistic regression analysis was performed for the association between two indices: non-recommended foods (NRF) and economic impact on diet (IED). The first was based on the frequency of consumption of unhealthy foods according to the ENSANUT4. The second included the socioeconomic situation of individuals in relation to their ability to pay for their basic needs and the economic problems that affected the quality of their diet.

The analysis showed significant association between these two indexes (Table 1),  $p < 0.05$  with an OR of 4.6, demonstrating that individuals with a negative NRF index are 4.6 times more likely to consume unhealthy foods.

**Table 1: Regression logistics analysis between IED and NRF**

Association between Economy and intake of Non Recommended Food	
Results	OR: 4.6 IC 2.1-3.7 $p < 0.05$

## Discussion

The findings of this study support the existing evidence to the closer relationship between the economic situation and dietary patterns [4-6].

This significant association suggests that the perception of economic situation and financial problems influence the dietary decisions of the population [7,8].

This accentuates the importance of addressing not only dietary aspects, but also socioeconomic aspects when designing programs to promote healthy eating in communities such as Zempoala [9,10].

It is important to remember that among the determinants of health, lifestyle is the one in which the least is invested. The slogan “poor people first” used, as a discourse, is excellent, but there is no real impact on the poor nor positive changes in their lifestyle, this leads to think that ultimately poverty in a country is imminent, but it is also associated with the intake of unhealthy foods, since it is eating as my aunt Tomasa says; “Poor man's belly bursting but not over” or “Full stomach, happy heart”, this is rather full of cholesterol and frequently in people with diabetes, but also the high intake of flour is associated with overweight, obesity and type II diabetes, as my grandfather used to say, “A word to the wise is enough”.

## Conclusions

Individuals with a negative IED index are 4.6 times more likely to consume unhealthy foods. It is very important to address economic problems, lifestyle to improve healthy eating mainly in vulnerable people.

This study gives guidelines to the importance of addressing economic issues to modify dietary habits towards the promotion of healthy eating. It is crucial to continue researching strategies that improve access to healthy foods and promote a balanced diet, especially in disadvantaged socioeconomic contexts.

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