

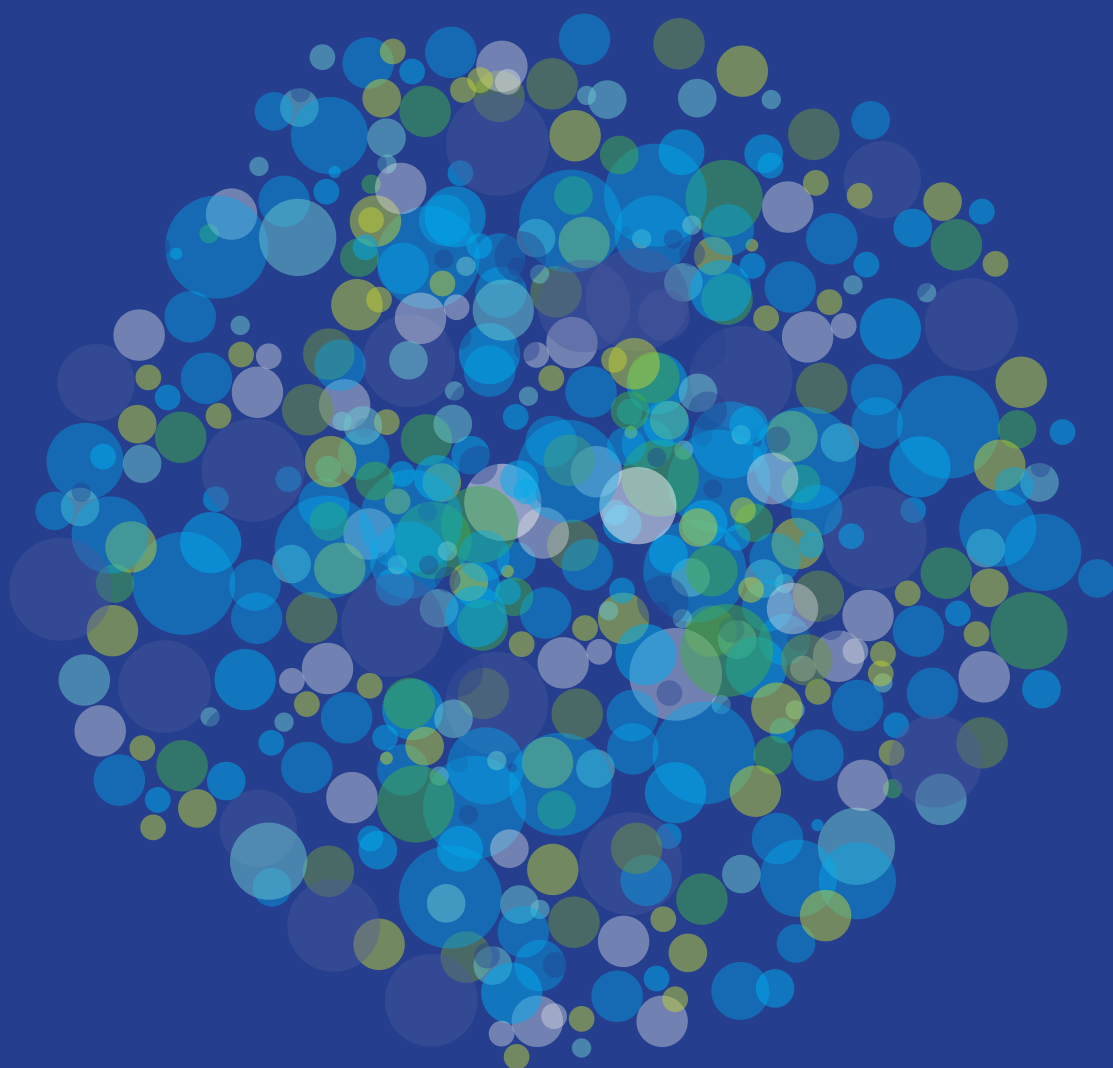


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Global report on the state of dietary data



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DIETARY DATA USE

Policy and regulatory uses of dietary surveys in Brazil

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In Brazil, dietary factors – including the excessive consumption of salt, sugars and fats, as well as insufficient intake of fibre, whole grains, fruits and vegetables – are among the major risks for NCDs, and are observed across all age groups and geographic regions of the country. In parallel, food and nutrition insecurity are prevalent among vulnerable populations, resulting in a double burden of malnutrition.

Food and nutrition policies in Brazil have historically been evidence-based, and the use of nationally representative dietary data – from the country's main HBS, known as the *Pesquisa de Orçamentos Familiares* (POF) and from other specific dietary surveys – are key inputs for policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. For example, the revision of the national dietary guidelines was based on the identification of healthy food patterns related to the degree of food processing, as reported in the quantitative 24-hour dietary recall information collected in the national POF (Costa Louzada *et al.*, 2015). This allowed for the development of realistic and achievable dietary recommendations, based on actual consumption. According to the POF,

approximately 20 percent of the Brazilian population already had a healthier diet compared to the rest of the population (i.e. a diet based on freshly prepared dishes and fewer industrialized or ultraprocessed foods). The analysis also found that diets with a larger share of ultraprocessed foods are associated with overall loss of diet quality (considering both macronutrients and micronutrients), and increased risk of overweight and obesity (Louzada *et al.*, 2015). This led to the golden rule of the dietary guidelines: to always prefer natural or minimally processed foods and freshly made dishes.

The POF data can be disaggregated to the census sectors in Brazil, and linked to other surveys based on these territories. This can generate interesting and useful analyses of food environments, for example to indicate household access to healthy and unhealthy foods. It can then allow for the plotting of these results against maps of fresh produce markets, food deserts and food swamps.

The nutritional analysis of POF data has also been used to inform several food regulation and food reformulation

policies in Brazil. Sodium and sugar reduction initiatives (based on the reformulation of processed and ultraprocessed foods) have used POF data to determine the priority food categories for reformulation according to their contribution to nutrient intake. More recently, modelling studies have been undertaken to estimate the impact of these reductions and compare different policy options for influencing food and nutrient intake (Nilson *et al.*, 2020).

In the regulatory field related to NCD prevention, several policies have benefited from POF data for modelling the impact of different policy scenarios as part of their Regulatory Impact Analysis reports. Examples include the national discussion on front-of-pack nutrition labelling (FOPL), the comparison of estimated changes in food consumption and intake of critical nutrients, and the health and economic impact of different FOPL models (including traffic lights and warnings). Other food regulatory processes have used POF data to inform and adjust rules to the context of the population. For example, the revision of the regulation on mandatory flour

fortification used POF data to justify the selection of appropriate food vehicles (maize and wheat flour) for fortification, as well as for setting safe lower and upper limits for iron and folic acid fortification levels, considering overall micronutrient intake by sex and age group (Dos Santos *et al.*, 2015).

As these examples have demonstrated, dietary data in Brazil have been used to design, implement, monitor and evaluate a range of interventions and policies tailored both to the general population and to specific population groups. Increasing the use of HBS data will be extremely helpful for improved decision making and greater

cost-effectiveness in the promotion of healthier diets, and in the prevention of negative diet-related outcomes such as NCDs and micronutrient deficiencies.



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