

Abstract (English)

Background: So far, Switzerland could not rely on nationally representative data on measured anthropometric data and eating behaviors when establishing health related strategies and guidelines. The data from the first National Nutrition Survey for adults (menuCH) now complement information from other surveys, to inform public health policies and health professionals.

Setting: One-year cross-sectional nutrition survey conducted from January 2014 till February 2015. Data were collected on 2085 participants aged 18-75 years representing 4'622'018 inhabitants (49.9% men and 50.1% women) residing in the three main linguistic regions of Switzerland (German, French and Italian).

Methods: Interviews were carried out in German, French or Italian by trained dieticians in 10 study centers. Participants provided written informed consent. Respondent completed a self-administered paper-pencil dietary and physical activity behavior questionnaire including reported anthropometric and sociodemographic characteristics. Body weight, height and waist circumference were measured using standardized procedures. Body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference were categorized using WHO criteria. After sample weighting and calibration, descriptive stratified statistical analysis was performed, considering linguistic regions, sex, age groups and educational levels.

Results: The net response rate was 38%. Average BMI was 25.9 kg/m² for men and 24.1 kg/m² for women, with little differences across linguistic regions. Mean BMI was 23.5, 25.0, 25.9 and 26.1 kg/m² in the 18-34, 35-49, 50-64 and 65-75 year categories, respectively. The prevalence of overweight and obesity was 41.6% and 13.9% in men, 19.7% and 11.3% in women, 31.0% and 12.5% in the German-speaking region, 29.9% and 12.3% in the French-speaking region, and 30.1% and 15.6% in the Italian-speaking region, respectively. The prevalence of waist circumference at increased and highly increased metabolic risk was 16.7% and 16.5% overall, 18.6% and 16.4% in men as well as 14.8% and 16.6% in women, respectively. About 53% of the population wishes to reduce body weight. Three out of four people in the population have heard about the food pyramid and two-third about five fruits and vegetables a day. Among special diets, 4.9% of the population report to follow a vegetarian diet, 4.1% an energy restriction diet, 3.3% a fat restriction diet and 2.6% a lactose-free diet. A substantial proportion of the population (56.4% of women and 38.1% of men) reports to take vitamin or mineral supplements. The majority of the population (>80%) takes a snack at least once per day, with similar pattern during weekdays and weekends. Women are more likely to spend a long time cooking (>40 minutes) than men (50.3% vs 30.7%). The most frequently consistently skipped meal is breakfast for 5.2% of the population, followed by lunch (2.2%) and dinner (0.6%). Nearly 50% of the population report to walk at least 30 minutes per day, five days per week. The majority of the population (87.0%) reports to be trained, regularly physically active or irregularly active, thereby meeting current recommendations. One third of the population reports a sitting time higher than 8h30 minutes per day, which reflects a high level of sedentarity.

Conclusion: menuCH, the first National Nutrition Survey for adults in Switzerland, provides important novel information on overweight, obesity and waist circumference based on measured data, in the population aged 18-75 years. The survey also shows that knowledge about dietary recommendations is very good, vitamin and mineral supplements are frequently consumed and self-reported cooking habits differ by sex. Reported physical activity levels are quite high, despite a high level of sedentarity.