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# Risk of metabolic complications and association with cooking skills and Mediterranean food pattern in a Portuguese economically disadvantaged population

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Actually, approximately 18.7% of the Portuguese population is at poverty risk. Socioeconomic factors have been reported to influence lifestyle and nutritional status. The present study is part of a project which is being developed by a Portuguese Social Solidarity Private Institution. The aim of this study is to verify the association between the risk of metabolic complications and two factors, cooking skills (CS) and adherence to the Mediterranean Food Pattern (MFP).

The population consisted of 99 low income householders, 82 females, between the ages of 21 and 66. A questionnaire containing several sections was applied (socioeconomic data, physical activity, smoking habits and presence of diseases, 24 hours dietary recall, adherence to MFP<sup>[1]</sup> and level of CS<sup>[2]</sup>). Height, weight and waist circumference were measured according to international procedures. The waist-to-height ratio<sup>[3]</sup> (WHtR) was used to assess the risk of metabolic complications.

This population is characterized mostly by individuals with only 5 to 6 years of education. It was found 1.2% of underweight, 30.2% of normal weight, 26.7% of overweight and 41.9% of obesity. Using the WHtR, 82.4% of the population showed risk of developing metabolic complications. Adherence to the MFP showed a mean value of 5.63 ( $\pm 1.87$ ), in a scale varying from 0 to 14 points. For CS, a mean of 4.74 ( $\pm 1.02$ ) was obtained in a scale varying from 1 to 6 points. Correlation between adherence to MFP and CS was low and not significant ( $\rho=1.160$ ;  $p=0.165$ ). Mann-Whitney test using the variables WHtR and MFP or CS showed non-significant results ( $p=0.335$ ;  $p=0.651$ , respectively).

It was observed a trend for overweight and obesity and a high risk of developing metabolic complications. The adherence to MFP was low and not related with CS. No significant association between metabolic risk and MFP or CS was found.

## References:

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[3] Ashwell, M., Gunn, P. and Gibson, S. (2012), *Waist-to-height ratio is a better screening tool than waist circumference and BMI for adult cardiometabolic risk factors: systematic review and meta-analysis*, Obesity Reviews, 13 (3), 275-286.