

Social inequalities in following official guidelines on healthy diet during the period of economic crisis in Spain

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Abstract

In Spanish society there continue to be social inequalities in connection with diet; however, there are no data to examine whether these inequalities altered during the period of economic crisis. This article aims to analyze trends in inequalities related to adherence to government guidelines concerning healthy diet during the period of economic crisis based on the data obtained from the National Health Surveys conducted by the National Statistics Institute. The approach involves studying first the data from the 2006 survey, shortly before the crisis, and then comparing these with the data of the 2011–12 survey. Applying models of logistic regression shows that certain social inequalities were accentuated by the crisis. However, the general and widespread pattern of eating habits does not disappear in times of crisis. Inequalities are more commonly seen when socioeconomic factors affect foods that the guidelines indicate should be eaten daily. However, with respect to more expensive products, socioeconomic factors did not have so much negative effect on how far a healthy diet was followed because it is recommended that consumption of these foods should be limited. The results suggest specific focuses for food policy during times of economic recession, though not limited to these periods.

Keywords: Healthy diet. Spain. Dietary inequality. Food and crisis. Eating recommendations. Official guidelines.

Despite evident improvements in health and nutrition in Spanish society, dietary inequalities associated with sociodemographic and economic factors continue^{1,2}. Adherence to a healthy diet shows patterns of social inequality, as in other countries^{3,4,5,6}. Following the advent of the economic crisis in 2008,