

CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION ACROSS BORDERS: The Promise of US-Latin American Research Collaboration

BACKGROUND

Childhood obesity is increasing at alarming rates across the world, highlighting the need for evidence-based interventions. Research on innovative new strategies to tackle childhood obesity is taking place in the United States and in countries across Latin America. However, studies and programs are too often siloed, resulting in a fractured response to a highly interconnected region-wide issue.

Obesity Reviews published a special issue, *Childhood Obesity Prevention Research Across Borders: The Promise of US-Latin American Research Collaboration*, which shares research strategies and proven methods among researchers from Latin America and the United States.

PROJECT GOAL

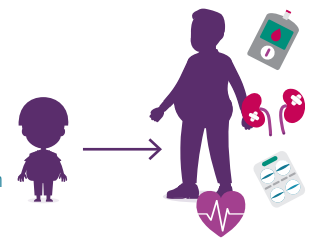
The aim of the *Childhood Obesity Prevention Across Borders: The Promise of US-Latin American Research Collaboration*, led by the [NIH Fogarty International Center](#), is to address the multifaceted nature of childhood obesity prevention in Latin America and among Latino populations in the United States. Sharing research strategies and proven methods among researchers from Latin America and the United States, especially those working with US Latino populations, can help identify common ground and lessons learned for the adaptation and implementation of evidence-informed childhood obesity prevention interventions. In addition, scientific exchange can identify shared research questions and priorities moving forward that could be addressed collaboratively.



This rising trend is mirrored across the entire Latin American region, and research shows that it is accelerating faster in low- and middle-income countries.



Childhood obesity negatively impacts quality of life and significantly increases the risk of becoming obese as an adult, with increased morbidity and mortality.



EXAMPLES. At both national and local levels, Latin America and the United States have been active in the implementation of innovative policy interventions to tackle obesity and non-communicable diseases. Mutual learning, though currently limited in scope, is already happening.



MEXICO

A tax on sugar-sweetened beverages and nonessential energy-dense food was enabled by cooperation among academia, civil society, and the legislative and executive branches of government.



ARGENTINA

Evidence that almost all food in Argentina contains high levels of trans fatty acids (TFAs) led to the decision to significantly reduce TFAs from the food supply.



CHILE

Public health researchers and advocates were key to passing front-of-package labeling legislation.



ECUADOR

Motivated by data from a national nutrition survey, the Ministry of Health and Government of Ecuador demonstrated strong political will to enact a traffic light label regulation.



Ciclovía (also known as Open Streets), a program that promotes physical activity by closing streets to cars on the weekends, was institutionalized at a national level in Colombia and has been implemented in cities across the United States, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, and the District of Columbia.

more than

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CITIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE IMPLEMENTED **Open Streets**

CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION ACROSS BORDERS SUPPLEMENT

The supplement in [Obesity Reviews](#) harnesses a particular layer of the Community-Energy Balance Framework to understand the contextual influences that define the problem, the current research landscape, and the opportunities for cross-border learning. In addition, it details the measurement challenges, research capacity needs, and chemical exposures that cut across the field. Finally, the supplement identifies innovative methods and scientific tools that could advance the development and delivery of interventions that require multi-sector collaboration. The supplement includes the following articles:

1. Childhood Obesity Prevention Across Borders: The Promise of US-Latin American Research Collaboration
2. Food Environment Solutions for Childhood Obesity in Latin America and Among Latinos Living in the United States
3. Built Environment in Programs to Promote Physical Activity Among Latino Children and Youth Living in the United State and in Latin America
4. The Social Environment and Childhood Obesity: Implications for Research and Practice in the United States and Countries in Latin America
5. Migration as a Determinant of Childhood Obesity in the United States and Latin America
6. Exposure to Obesogenic Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals and Obesity Among Youth of Latino or Hispanic Origin in the United States and Latin America: A Lifecourse Perspective
7. Measurement Challenges for Childhood Obesity Research Within and Between Latin America and the United States
8. Capacity for Childhood Obesity Research in Latin American and United States Latino Populations: State of the Field, Challenges, Opportunities and Future Directions
9. Implementation of Childhood Obesity Prevention and Control Policies in the United States and Latin America: Lessons for Cross-Borders Research and Practice
10. An Action-Oriented Framework for Systems-Based Solutions Aimed at Childhood Obesity Prevention in US Latinx and Latin American Populations
11. Childhood Obesity Prevention Across Borders: An NIH Commentary

SUPPLEMENT THEMES

The supplement as a whole provides information, frameworks, and evidence that can contribute to the design and monitoring of policy actions for the prevention of obesity in children and adolescents in Latin America, the Caribbean, and in Latino populations in the United States.



EQUITY AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Understand risk factors for unhealthy diets and physical inactivity to develop effective and equitable policies and programs that consider social injustice, historical trauma, and structural racism.



MIGRATION

Improve acculturation frameworks and methods to better understand how the process of exposure to new cultures affects dietary and physical activity behaviors.



INNOVATIVE METHODS AND SCIENTIFIC TOOLS

Use innovative methods and scientific tools, including implementation science, systems science, and participatory action models, to advance insights relevant to the development and delivery of more potent interventions in this field and encourage collaborations with and learning from numerous countries.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Support sustainable capacity building aimed at research, policy, and practice activities within and across countries that will help to ensure that childhood obesity prevention efforts across borders in the Americas are synergistic and evidence-based. Strategies to strengthen capacity include increasing research training, funding, and networking opportunities as well as innovative approaches to multidisciplinary team science.



DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICIES

Enact policy actions at different levels of impact, from local through national levels, and address gaps in evidence related to the design and evaluation of childhood obesity prevention policies and interventions.



Learn more: nccor.org/globallessons

Read the full supplement: <https://bit.ly/acrossborders-obesity>

Partners: National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive, and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute on Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), NIH Office of Disease Prevention (ODP)

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