

Colombia: Obesity Health System



Economic classification



Upper Middle Income¹

Health system summary

Colombia's health system is dominated by its General Social Security Health System that consists of 3 plans: a contributory plan for workers, a subsidised plan for those who cannot pay and a third plan for workers from certain institutions. Enrolment into this system is compulsory, and so coverage is high. In 2015, coverage was 97.6%². Members of the plans are entitled to similar benefits, benefits that include health promotion, prevention, medication and cash benefits during maternity. Members of the subsidised plan have an inferior benefit package to contributory members. As a result of these 1993 reforms, Colombia has made great strides in improving healthcare access and financial protection. Out of pocket expenditure as a proportion of total health expenditure is approximately 15.9%².

Colombia, however, has several vulnerable populations (mostly in rural, remote areas) that still have poor access to care and are at high risk of nutritional deficiencies. These groups include indigenous groups, farmers and Afro-descendent groups.

Where is Morocco's government in the journey towards defining 'Obesity as a disease'?



Where is Morocco's healthcare provider in the journey towards defining 'Obesity as a disease'?



In practice, how is obesity treatment largely funded?



(●: Government, ●: Insurance, ●: Out of pocket expense, ●: Unknown)

Have any taxes or subsidies been put in place to protect/assist/inform the population around obesity?



Is there specialist training available dedicated to the training of health professionals to prevent, diagnose, treat and manage obesity?



Are there any obesity-specific treatment recommendations or guidelines published for adults?



Are there adequate numbers of trained health professionals in specialties relevant to obesity in urban areas?



Are there any obesity-specific treatment recommendations or guidelines published for children?



Are there adequate numbers of trained health professionals in specialties relevant to obesity in rural areas?



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Obesity prevalence

15.2%	11.5%
Women	Men

Overweight prevalence

31.1%	Unk %
Women	Men

Key prevention policies

- ⇒ In Bogota, several streets close to cars on Sundays and holidays during certain hours to promote physical activity
- ⇒ Mandatory nutrient lists on packaged foods

Summary of stakeholder feedback*

In 2009, Colombia passed an 'obesity law' that calls obesity a disease and outlines policies and initiatives that should be undertaken for the prevention and control of obesity. Still, one stakeholder feels that the government is too supportive of food producers and multinational companies and there is a general consensus that there is much more work to be done around prevention and treatment. There is said to be little financial investment into the cause.

It is unclear how obesity treatment is typically funded in Colombia, but cost was highlighted as a barrier to treatment. There was a lack of consensus on the BMI level required to be eligible for treatment and how those living with obesity enter the system, but it was agreed that long waiting lists was often the reason why they left.

While there does not appear to be specialist obesity training in Colombia, stakeholders reported that there is some obesity training for certain professionals such as endocrinologists.

**Based on interviews/survey returns from 4 stakeholder*

Perceived barriers to treatment

High cost of out-of-pocket payments

Obesity not recognised as a disease

Lack of training for healthcare professionals

Lack of political will, interest and action

Lack of healthcare professional interest in obesity

Resistance to innovation

Poor adherence or fear of treatment

Lack of evidence, monitoring and research

References

1. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-country-classifications-income-level-2019-2020> (last accessed 29.08.2019)
2. <https://www.paho.org/salud-en-las-americas-2017/?p=2342> (last accessed 17.12.2019)
3. https://www.who.int/alliance-hpsr/projects/alliancehpsr_colombiaprimasys.pdf?ua=1 (last accessed 17.12.2019)

Last updated December 2019