

# Is there an association between sociodemographic factors and the intention of purchasing foods with nutrient warning labels? Experiencing Chilean food labelling and advertising laws

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With a pioneering experience in the world, Chile implemented in 2016, the law 20.606 “On nutritional composition of food and its advertising”, whose objective was to provide a clear and more understandable information to the food consumers, through front-of-package nutrient warning label policy<sup>(1)</sup>. These labels classify food into four categories: a) “high in calories”, b) “high in added sugar”, c) “high in sodium” and d) “high in saturated fat”<sup>(2)</sup>, where a product could contain one or more nutrient warning labels. However, to date there is little evidence on the influence of sociodemographic factors on the intention of purchasing foods that have or do not have these front-of-package nutrient warning labels. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the association between the sociodemographic factors and the intention to purchase foods with nutrient warning labels, based on data from the 2016–2017 Chilean National Health Survey (CNHS). Cross sectional analytical study. We analyzed the data from the CNHS (2016–2017), which is a complex cluster random sampling survey with national representativeness of the Chilean population. The inclusion criteria for participants were that they be residents of one of the 15 regions of the country and that they were older than 15 years old at the moment of applying the survey. We analyzed the records of 5,100 participants who answered a question about the intention of buying foods without front-of-package nutrient warning label. The independent variables considered sociodemographic factors such as age, sex, educational level, residency area and ethnicity, stratified by income levels (terciles). 29% of the participants analyzed indicated the intention of purchasing foods without nutrient warning labels. Statistically significant associations between female sex ( $p < 0.001$ ), older age ( $p < 0.001$ ), higher educational level ( $p < 0.001$ ), residence in urban areas ( $p < 0.001$ ), and Caucasian population ( $p < 0.001$ ), with a better compliance with checking nutrient warning labels were observed. When stratifying levels of income, it was observed that the group with the lowest income, the female sex (OR 0.71; CI 0.54–0.93) and the highest educational level (OR 0.32; CI 0.20–0.51) were associated with a better compliance to consider the front stamps in the purchasing of food. By contrast, belonging to an ethnic group (OR 1.72; CI 1.17–2.60) and living in rural areas (OR 1.56; CI 1.05–2.36) were considered risk factors for not complying with this recommendation. In the strata with higher income, no statistically significant associations were observed. In the present study, a strong association was observed between sociodemographic factors and compliance with considering frontal warning labels when purchasing food, showing evidence of the influence of health determinants over alimentary behavior. These findings should be considered when implementing public policies associated to food sale regulations.

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## References

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