

GENDER SPECIFIC PREVALENCE OF CARDIOVASCULAR RISK FACTORS IN LATIN AMERICA: RESULTS FROM LASO

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Objective To assess gender disparities in the prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors (CVRFs) in Latin America (LA). **Background:** Although cardiovascular diseases constitute the leading cause of mortality, there are few data on the prevalence of CVRFs in LA. **Methods:** We estimated the prevalence of CVRFs and age-adjusted odds ratios (ORa) for gender using data from probabilistic surveys included in the Consortium of Latin American Studies in Obesity (LASO) and conducted from 1998-2005 in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Peru, and Venezuela.

Results: This analysis includes 25,023 individuals (mean age: 47.6 years, 39.4% males). Hypertension was the most frequent CVRF, with an overall prevalence of 39.5% in men and 35.9% in women (ORa: 0.97, p=0.350). The prevalence of abdominal obesity (waist circumference $\geq 102/88$ cm in men/women) was significantly higher in women (48.4% versus 19.4%; ORa: 4.35, p<0.001). About 20% of all subjects were obese (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²), 22% of women and 15.6% of men (ORa: 1.56; p<0.001). Hypercholesterolemia was also more frequent in women (13.8% versus 10.4%), even after adjustment for age (ORa: 1.54; p<0.001). Similar results were observed for high LDL cholesterol. Finally, type II diabetes was slightly more prevalent among women (9.0% versus 8.7%; ORa=1.16, p=0.005). On the contrary, smoking prevalence was considerably lower in women (15.4% versus 17.3%; ORa: 0.47, p<0.001).

Conclusion The prevalence of CVRFs in LA is similar to that observed in more developed countries, and significantly higher among women, with the exception of smoking. The causes and impact of these gender disparities warrant further investigation.