Implementing *FoodSwitch* in Mexico: First steps towards a Mexican Food Database

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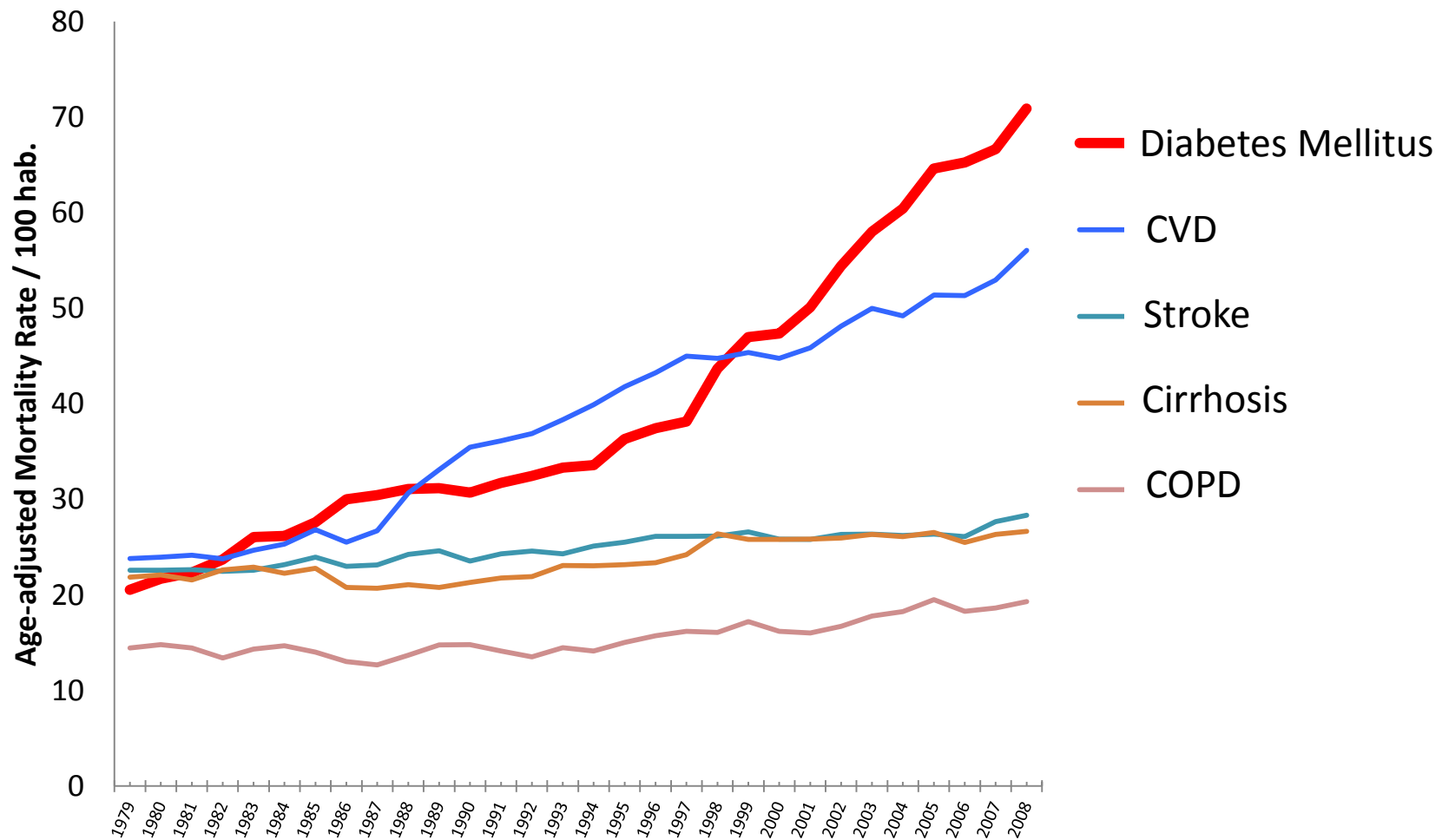MEXICO

CONTENT

1. Background: NCD's in Mexico

1. Alternative to inform: *FoodSwitch app*

1. Development of the Mexican Food Database: methodology, results and limitations

2. Future work: Collaboration with The George Institute

Mortality trends in Mexico 1979-2010: Diabetes Mellitus and CVD as main all-age causes of death

Barquera S et al. Globalization and Health, 2013

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FoodSwitch application

- *FoodSwitch* is a downloadable smartphone app designed to support people to make healthier food choices.

- Launched in Australia, New Zealand and UK in 2012

- Allows the consumer to scan the barcode of packaged foods using a smartphone camera and receive immediate, easy to understand nutritional advice and a list of similar foods that are healthier choices.

- Practical and easy to understand information on healthier alternatives in the market

Objectives

1. To collect the labeling information of food and beverages available in the Mexican market through crowdsourcing with collaboration in different parts of the country.

2. To develop an initial dataset with a food inventory of industrialized products in Mexico.

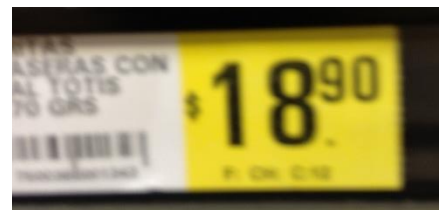3. To develop and implement FoodSwitch as a free app in Mexico

Methodology

- **Selection of establishments and permission letters**
  - Supermarkets
  - Warehouse clubs
  - Convenience stores

- **Photo collection of products within establishment**
  - 27 photographers: institute workers and collaborating university students
    - iPods
    - Cell phones

- **Input of information in database**
  - Information on claims, warnings, nutritional information, ingredient list and price
    - 13 data entry clerks

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Photo collection per product

For each product 6 photographs were taken:

1. Barcode
2. Front of package
3. Price
4. GDA labeling
5. Nutritional labeling
6. List of ingredients

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Organization of food products for input of information

- In order to make the comparison between food products:
  - Divided into 24 categories.
    - Proposed by The Mexican Committee of Experts
    - Choices International Programme

- Each food category has criteria for specific nutrients, such as:
  - TFA
  - SFA
  - Sodium
  - Sugar
  - Fiber

Food categories	
1. Meat and meat products	13. Cheese
2. Sauces and dressings	14. Pastas and potatoes
3. Butter, fats and oils	15. Corn products
4. Spreads	16. Rice and other grains
5. Beverages	17. Legumes
6. Savory snacks	18. Flour mixes
7. Sweet snacks	19. Seafood
8. Cereals	20. Mexican food preparations
9. Fruits and vegetables	21.Ready to eat
10. Dairy	22. Infant food
11. Salted bread	23. Soup and creams
12. Cookies	24. Sweeteners

Overview of current results

- **81 establishments**

- **Major cities in Mexico**
  1. Mexico City (69%)
  2. Guadalajara (10.6%)
  3. Monterrey (2.2%)
  4. Queretaro (4.8%)
  5. Hermosillo (0.7%)
  6. San Luis Potosí (0.5%)
  7. Cuernavaca (12.1%)

- **54,165 photographs → 10,777 products collected**
  - Food categories with the most available products:
    - Beverages (15%)
    - Sweet snacks (10%)
    - Sauces and dressings (8%)

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Future work – Collaboration with The George Institute

Fieldwork
- Continue collection of label photographs of food and beverages available in the market

Data Collector app
The George Institute
- Data entry to existing database
- Cover most products available in the Mexican market
- Enable the monitoring of processed foods around the world

FoodSwitch Mexico
- Develop app with Mexican food information
- Make app available for download nationwide

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Observed limitations

- **Permission for access to establishments**
  - Restricted the amount of products collected
  - Limited access to products aimed at higher socioeconomic level

- **Deficient/incorrect information on labels**
  - Errors on units
  - Wrong translation of label for imported products
  - No information on portion size for the reported nutritional information
  - Incomplete information
  - Nutrition information reported as percentages
  - Duplication of barcodes for different product or two barcodes for one product

- **Data collector malfunction after long periods of use**

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Thank You!

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