REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE CONSUMPTION OF PROVITAMIN A CAROTENOIDS IN BRAZIL


The continental proportions of Brazil contribute to distinctions in dietary habits and nutritional disorders. Adequate intake of the provitamins is essential in combating vitamin A deficiency, more common in developing countries. The aim of this study was to evaluate the consumption of provitamin A carotenoids, according to the five Brazilian regions, especially the consumption away from home. We used secondary data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey - POF 2008-2009, published by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). The sample consisted of 34,003 study subjects (13,569 households), of at least 10 years of age. Food names were entered at the moment of being consumed specifying if the intake of the food item occurred at home or away from home. A specific database was constructed for the calculation of carotenoids. Prudent levels of consumption were considered to be 5,200 to 6,000 µg/per capita/day for the A provitamins. Residents from the South Region showed the highest per capita/day consumption (2,220µg), followed by the Midwest (2,077µg), Northeast (1,830µg), Southeast (1,660µg) and the North (1,150µg). As for the out-of-home food, the following values were observed for consumers by regions: North 244.8µg (21.2%), Midwest 421.5µg (20.3%), South 369.04µg (16.6%), Southeast 273.4µg (14.3%) and Northeast 213.7µg (11.7%). Consumption was considered still low nationwide. The contribution of food away from home accounted for 20% of the total intake in most regions. Public policies are important tools for encouraging the consumption of food source of the provitamins for the Brazilian population.