CAROTENOID CONSUMPTION AND INCOME IN BRAZIL


Carotenoids are substances with antioxidant function in the human body, being important in the prevention of chronic diseases. Income can be a decisive factor in food choice and location of the meal. The aim of this study was to define the consumption of carotenoids by the Brazilian population according to income levels, emphasizing the consumption away from home. For the analyses we used data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey-POF 2008-2009, published by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics-IBGE. Integrated the sample 34,003 individuals from throughout Brazil, of over 10 years of age. The authors constructed a specific database, for calculating the carotenoids. Prudent levels of consumption were considered to be 5,200 to 6,000 µg/per capita/day for the A provitamins. The subjects were grouped into four strata per capita income strata (in Real-R$): up to 296, 296-571, 571-1,089 and above 1,089. The results showed that the per capita daily intake of total carotenoids increased as income grew (3,065 µg, 3,610 µg, 4,150 µg and 5,540 µg). The contribution of the away-from-home consumption also increased with the increase of income: 12.5%, 15.5%, 16.7% and 20.2%. A similar situation occurred with the pro-vitamin A carotenoids: the lowest income group consumed 1,380µg (of these, 11.8% outside the home), against 2,380µg for the highest (20.5% outside the home). Income proved to be an important factor for the selection of carotenogenic foods, although even the strata with higher incomes and higher consumption seemed to opt for diets which may not provide sufficient health promoting effects.