

Delva, J., O'Malley, P. M., & Johnston, L. D. (2007). Health-related behaviors and overweight: A study of Latino adolescents in the United States of America. *Pan American Journal of Public Health, 21*(1), 11–20.

## Abstract

**Objectives.** This study examined, by gender, differences in being overweight among adolescents of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Latin American heritage who live in the United States of America, and investigated the relationships between these differences and socioeconomic status, health-related behaviors, and family characteristics.

**Methods.** This cross-sectional survey study obtained and analyzed data from nationally representative samples of Latino 8th and 10th graders in the Monitoring the Future study from 1991 to 2004 ( $N = 11,265$ ).

**Results.** A higher proportion of Mexican-American girls were overweight than other Latin American girls, both before and after adjusting for many confounders. For both genders, being overweight was inversely associated with socioeconomic status and frequency of vigorous exercise, and positively associated with the amount of television viewing. No family characteristic variable examined was associated with overweight.

**Conclusions.** Time spent exercising and time spent watching television are two potentially modifiable risk factors that, if targeted, may result in important reductions in overweight. The findings indicate the need to identify gender- and culturally-appropriate interventions that can increase physical activity and reduce sedentary activities among Latino adolescents, particularly in families of low socioeconomic status.