

Brazil alarmed over rising obesity rate

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In Brazil, a country known for girls in mini-bikinis and where body-consciousness borders on obsession, nearly half the population is overweight, a study by the Ministry of Health released Tuesday found.

"There is a tendency toward increased weight and obesity in the country. It's time to reverse the trend to avoid becoming a country like the United States," said [Health Minister](#) Alexandre Padilha.

According to the study, the percentage of overweight people increased from 42.7% in 2006 to 48.5% in 2011 while the obesity rate increased from 11.4% to 15.8% in the same period.

The highest rates for overweight were found among men 35 years old to 45 years old (63%) and women 45 years old to 54 years old (55.9%).

The youngest group in the study were 18-to-24-year olds, where 30% of the men and 25% of the women were overweight.

"Adopting public policies for children and adolescents is essential to prevent people from becoming obese," the health minister said.

He said a third of [Brazilians](#) consume either high fat foods or sugared [soft drinks](#) at least five times a week.

The study showed nearly 40% of men and 22% of women exercise regularly.

The study was based on 54,000 interviews of adults across Brazil from January to December 2011.

The highest obesity rate was reported in Macapa at 21.4%, followed by Porto Alegre at 19.6%. Sao Paulo reported a 15.5% obesity rate while [Rio de Janeiro](#) came in at 16.5%.

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