

Study finds that government-implemented warning labels can help reducing poor-nutrition related diseases

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The adoption of best practice front-of-pack nutrition labeling in more countries of the Americas can help reduce poor-nutrition related non-

communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular disease, type-2 diabetes, high blood pressure and some cancers in the region, a [recent study](#) led by researchers at the University of Nevada, Reno and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) suggests.

The study, published today in the *Lancet Regional Health Americas*, examined the evolution of these policies within the PAHO/World Health Organization Region of the Americas (AMRO).

Improvements to front-of-pack [nutrition](#) labeling (FOPNL) included larger warning labels, contrasted background for better noticeability, use of "excess" instead of "high in" to improve understanding, and adoption of PAHO's nutrient profile model to better define nutrient thresholds. FOPNL systems aim to aid a population's understanding of nutritional content in a product, reduce consumption of ultra-processed and processed food products high in fats, sugars and/or salt, and ultimately help consumers make healthier choices.

"The progress of front-of-pack nutrition warning labels in the Americas illustrates that the diffusion of best practices in the region have been shown to improve the nutritional quality of purchases and have been associated with improved diet quality, which in turn is associated with reduced risk of NCDs," Dr. Eric Crosbie, co-author on the study and associate professor in the University's School of Public Health, said.

In the Americas region, all 35 PAHO member states have discussed FOPNL, 30 countries have formally introduced FOPNL, 11 have adopted FOPNL and seven (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) have implemented FOPNL.

"Front-of-pack nutrition labels have evolved in the Americas to provide the best options to populations," Dr. Fabio Da Silva Gomes, co-author of the study and advisor of nutrition and physical activity at PAHO, said.

"The accumulated lessons and evidence have driven countries to reach regulatory excellence by adopting octagonal warning labels along with PAHO's nutrient profile model to protect and promote healthy eating and public health."

The study found that improved FOPNL gradually expanded its presence in the region, gaining momentum in the past few years and evolving to align with evidence and PAHO's best-practice policies. Researchers recommended that governments still discussing and waiting to implement FOPNL should follow such practices to improve the uptake and impact of the policy to help reduce poor-nutrition related NCDs in the Americas.

More information: Eric Crosbie et al, A policy study on front-of-pack nutrition labeling in the Americas: Emerging developments and outcomes, *The Lancet Regional Health—Americas* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.lana.2022.100400](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2022.100400)

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