

## The Latin American Consortium of Studies in Obesity (LASO).

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Current, high-quality data are needed to evaluate the health impact of the epidemic of obesity in Latin America. The Latin American Consortium of Studies of Obesity (LASO) has been established, with the objectives of (i) Accurately estimating the prevalence of obesity and its distribution by sociodemographic characteristics; (ii) Identifying ethnic, socioeconomic and behavioural determinants of obesity; (iii) Estimating the association between various anthropometric indicators or obesity and major cardiovascular risk factors and (iv) Quantifying the validity of standard definitions of the various indexes of obesity in Latin American population. To achieve these objectives, LASO makes use of individual data from existing studies. To date, the LASO consortium includes data from 11 studies from eight countries (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Peru, Puerto Rico and Venezuela), including a total of 32,462 subjects. This article describes the overall organization of LASO, the individual studies involved and the overall strategy for data analysis. LASO will foster the development of collaborative obesity research among Latin American investigators. More important, results from LASO will be instrumental to inform health policies aiming to curtail the epidemic of obesity in the region.

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