

## The Obesity A Social Problem in the Canary Islands?

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### Background

For some time now, obesity in the Canary Islands has been considered a social and health problem of the first order, and it also has a great impact on various chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes. This impact is affecting public spending, either through hospital admissions caused by these causes or by the large consumption of medicines that it entails.

Despite the plans have been carried out since different times for the control of obesity, both by public and private institutions, it is not possible to control the situation, finding today that the Canary Islands are among the communities with the highest rates of obesity in adults, in the Spanish state.

The Canary Islands obesity figure (1), stood at 16.6% in 2004 and 19.0% in 2021. In men, it was 16.5% (2004) and 19.4% (2021); in woman, 16.6% and 20.2%, respectively.

**Table 1:** Percentage of obesity in the population aged 16 years and over and of low-income people.

Canary Islands (2004-2021)

Canary Regions(Population. 2021)	Obesity (*) (%)	Obesity (*) (%)	Low incomes (**) (%)
	2004	2021	2021
Gomera	14.4	27.4	60.6
La Palma	14.8	23.0	50.0
Gran Canaria-South	22.8	21.1	45.5
El Hierro	16.2	20.6	47.9
Tenerife-South	16.8	20.4	46.1
Gran Canaria-North	16.4	20.1	44.1
Fuerteventura	14.9	19.7	44.0
Gran Canaria-Metropolitan	14.9	19.1	46.1
Lanzarote	17.8	18.3	41.1
Tenerife-North	16.1	17.8	58.3

<b>Tenerife-Metropolitan</b>	17.3	15,9	40.5
<b>Total (P: 2.172.944 )</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>19.6</b>	46.8

First, it should be noted that obesity 375.000 people in the Canary Islands (19.6% of the adult population in 2021). It can be seen how almost all regions increased the percentage of obesity in the period 2004-2021, except for the regions Gran Canaria-Sur and Tenerife-Metropolitan area, although in some of them, figures above 20% were reached in the adult population. Among them, the most notable are the regions of La Gomera and La Palma. However, it should be noted that at the time of 2021 health survey, there was a Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on all the islands that's prevented many families from relatively normal mobility. To control obesity, various contributions have been implemented from the health system, such as weight control and/or individual food intake, and/or individual food intake, and surgical measures with stomach reduction, as well as more collective measures from physical activity to others with effective results, although little evaluated. However, the problem of obesity in the Canary Islands is not fully controlled. According to data from the Spanish Society for Study of Obesity, 80% of diet attempts fail (El País, 16/09/2023). In this regard, food health, awareness-raising and training and training programmes should be implemented for general population. Moreover, the food marketing companies themselves should take greater responsibility for the products that are put on sale, with special attention to those that cause greater responsibility for the products that are put on sale, with special attention to those that cause greater obesity, and their pathological derivations. Due to enormous social cost of these diseases, many Western countries and private food corporations control and limit the consumption of unhealthy foods.

Some research in United Kingdom (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2005) or in the United States have integrated another inclusion criterion, of a more social nature, to address the control of obesity. It has been shown that there is a relationship between levels of economic inequality and abdominal weight gain in men and higher body mass index, in both men and woman. As complementary information, the percentage of low-income people (less than 750 euros per month) for each region has been incorporated in the last column of the table. There is a considerable influence between the proportion of obese people and the proportion of low-income people in the Canary Islands. This is expressed by the correlation coefficient (CC: -0,068) between both variables, and not only that, but other signs also indicate that the obesity is a social problem in the Canary Islands: the group of women, already more impoverished than men, show higher obesity figures. People with less education are also more likely to be obese; and pensioners achieve very high obesity rates. In short, future trends in obesity control should include these basic strategies to reduce obesity in the Canary Islands.