

First results of laboratory analysis in the National Health Survey

Primeiros resultados da análise do laboratório da Pesquisa Nacional de Saúde

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Health information is fundamental for the planning, programming, monitoring and management of individual and collective health interventions¹⁻⁴. Nationwide surveys are an extremely important component for a national health system and essential so one knows the health profile of a group, the distribution of risk factors, their trends and health inequalities¹⁻⁴. The information collected periodically allows monitoring health actions and programs in different population strata and also contributes to subsidize public policies^{1,2,4}.

The National Health Survey (NHS) stands out for being the largest health survey in Brazil, conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in partnership with the Ministry of Health and in collaboration with educational and research institutions. In addition to being a comprehensive study on the population studied and the topics addressed, the NHS is innovative in incorporates a collection of biological material (blood and urine samples) in a subsample, covering approximately nine thousand adults in the five major regions of the country⁵. The laboratory component was a partnership with Hospital Sírio-Libanês, and sample collection was carried out by DASA Laboratories across the country, through the financing of the Program for Development of the Unified Health System (PROADI-SUS), in 2014 and 2015.

This supplement in the Brazilian Journal of Epidemiology brings articles based on unpublished results of NHS laboratory, representing its potential to produce knowledge about the health characteristics and conditions of the Brazilian population and to improve surveillance of chronic noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and dengue in the country.

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The article that opens this collection addresses the methodological procedures for sampling, collecting and processing data for the NHS Laboratory. The article by Szwarcwald et al.⁶ presents the estimates and reference values for cholesterol, glycosylated hemoglobin and creatinine. Malta et al.⁷ described the reference values for specific blood counts according to gender, age and skin color. These two works point out the importance of having national reference values, especially in a country where the miscegenation and social and economic differences are so marked. Rosenfeld et al.⁸ describe the prevalence of hemoglobinopathies in Brazilian adults, the most prevalent ones being sickle cell trait and minor thalassemia, with predominance among black and brown-skin individuals. Mill et al.⁹ identified that Brazilians consume, on average, 9.34 g/day of salt, almost twice the recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

This collection also includes studies addressing populational diagnoses of prevalence and associated factors, incorporating content related to anemia, total cholesterol and fractions, kidney failure and diabetes, among other topics. The results from the NHS laboratory presented here make it possible to monitor the goals of the Global NCD Coping Action Plans¹⁰ and National Program for NCD 2011–2022¹¹, the advances in responding to NCDs, and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030¹², strengthening commitments with the theme, aiming to reduce morbidity and mortality by these diseases and to improve the health situation of the Brazilian population. These data form the baseline to reach goals such as stopping the growth of diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular diseases and reducing sodium consumption^{10,11}. The supplement also contains other NHS analyzes on oral health, healthy eating, pharmaceutical care, unpublished analyzes of female grant recipients, risk factors for chronic diseases and laboratory results.

The NHS's laboratory is a milestone for the Brazilian public health and we would like to highlight the valuable work of Dr. Gastão Rosenfeld, to whose memory we pay tribute, in his tireless efforts to collect laboratory data.

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