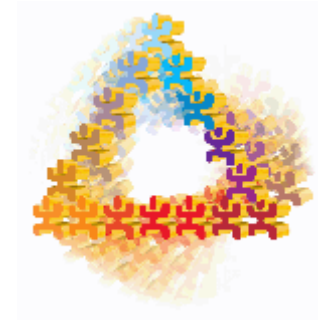




CARMEN Country Profiles: Puerto Rico



Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death in Puerto Rico.¹ The Age Standardized Mortality Rate (ASMR) from this cause rose from 205 per 100,000 population in 1997 to 218 per 100,000 in 1999, when cardiovascular diseases accounted for 29% of all deaths. Heart disease begins to be the leading cause of death among men at age 50–54 and among women at age 65 and over. In 1999, malignant neoplasms were the second leading cause of death in Puerto Rico. The mortality rate from this cause dropped from an ASM of 118 per 100,000 in 1997 to an ASM of 115 per 100,000 in 1999. Mortality from diabetes mellitus increased by 17% between 1990 and 1999; in 1999, it was the third leading cause of death, with an ASM rate of 56 per 100,000 population (55 per 100,000 females and 58 per 100,000 males). According to data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System of Puerto Rico, the prevalence of diagnosed diabetes fell from 11% in 1997 to 8.5% in 2000.

| Date | Evolution of the CARMEN Initiative |
|------|------------------------------------|
| | "Salud Recomendada" |
| | Community Monitoring Strategies |
| | CARMEN School |

A multi-step field methodology was designed for the development of planning, coordinating and implementing the CARMEN initiative within the country.² Steps of the process include a preliminary selection of a community, identification of community leadership, elaboration of promotional materials, training and monitoring of activities, promotion of health

¹ Pan American Health Organization. *Regional Core Health Data Initiative. Country Health Profiles*. 2002.

² Orengo, Juan Carlos. *CARMEN Initiative Meeting*. Brazil, November 2003.

activities, among others. The Ministry of Health, medical associations and universities are involved with NCD prevention and control.

Salud Recomendada

Puerto Rico has a nationwide NCD prevention program, and has implemented an initiative in partnership with the private sector (supermarkets, restaurants, fast food chains) called “Salud Recomendada” in order to boost the consumption of healthy food. By the end of 2003, there were 198 communities in 40 municipalities that voiced their special needs. 9,850 of the residents living in these communities already were beginning to benefit from the actions the community leadership had taken in reducing the risks of developing noncommunicable diseases.

Community Monitoring Strategies

The following Community Monitoring Strategies were introduced to fight the specific risk factors:

Obesity

- Health recommendations
- Collaboration with private companies to promote physical activity
- Physical Activity (>30 minutes, 5 times per week):
- 10 steps a day – “Move Puerto Rico”
- Encourage a healthy diet
- Travelers Club
- Bogota Model

Hypertension

- Instruction and training in “Know Your Health”
- Training in monitoring and self-management

Tobacco

- Anti-tobacco coalition
- “Quit & Win” Programs
- Amendment #40
- Training sessions for health professionals
- Alcohol (3 or more drinks per week)

In addition, Puerto Rico is in charge of developing the CARMEN School for the Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries.