

## **Economic Impact of Adopting Healthy Diet in Canada**

Topic: Health IO

Author: Kakali Mukhopadhyay

Co-Authors: PAUL J. THOMASSIN

The WHO recognizes obesity as a global health issue with one billion adults worldwide identified as overweight and an additional 300 million as obese. Obesity has come to be recognized as both a Canadian “epidemic” and a global “pandemic”. These facts indicate that the costs of chronic diseases such as obesity are increasing at a rapid rate and have negative implications for the well-being of the Canadian economy. Lifestyle plays an important role in determining the prevalence of chronic diseases. Among several initiatives, the provision of healthy diet is recommended as one of the important measures to address the problem of chronic diseases.

The paper estimates the macro economic impact of healthy diet guidelines announced by the Public Health Canada using Input-output framework. The study calculates a gap between actual and recommended consumption of Healthy diet in Canada for 2003. Results show that Canadian diet is influenced by more meat and less vegetables, fruits, milk and whole grains than the required one. The paper attempts to implement a number of strategies combining different food items in household consumption expenditure. An increase in GDP and employment is observed, if Canadian diet comprises more Vegetables and fruits, while more than double reduction in employment and GDP if consumption of meat is reduced. The combined strategy will generate more job as well as GDP. Finally the paper suggests some policy options.