

Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Diseases: A Comparison of Prevalences in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and in the USA

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Objective: To compare the prevalence of risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD) in Porto Alegre, Brazil and in the USA.

Methods: Sampling: cross-sectional studies of population-based samples of adults living in Porto Alegre and in the USA (*National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1999-2000*).

Risk factors: hypertension (blood pressure $\geq 140/90$ mmHg or use of blood pressure-lowering drugs), current smoking, abusive consumption of alcoholic beverages, sedentary, obesity (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²), overweight (BMI ≥ 25 kg/m²) and few years at school.

Analysis: comparison of standardized (for age and gender) prevalence of risk factors, with the USA population as reference.

Results: Fewer years at school, hypertension and smoking were more prevalent in Porto Alegre and sedentary, alcoholic beverage consumption, obesity and overweight were more prevalent in the USA ($P < 0.001$), both for men and women (table).

Conclusion: The difference in the prevalence of risk factors for CVD in the USA and Porto Alegre may explain the difference in the incidence rate of CVD, particularly of coronary heart disease and stroke.

	<11 years at school	Hypertension	Current smoking	Alcohol abuse	Sedentary	Obesity	Overweight
POA-men	50.3	36.5	38.8	14.9	63.5	12.3	53.0
POA-women	57.8	35.9	27.3	8.0	72.3	15.9	45.6
USA-men	39.9	29.8	24.7	15.5	79.7	26.2	65.3
USA-women	37.3	33.0	16.9	8.2	79.3	37.4	66.8