

IMPACT OF INCREASED FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION ON GASTRIC CANCER INCIDENCE IN A STATE OF THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON (2021–2024)

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Introduction: Gastric cancer is a major public health concern in Brazil, ranking as the third most common cancer among men and the fifth among women in the Northern Region (INCA, 2023). Studies indicate that dietary patterns high in ultra-processed foods, particularly those from fast food chains, are linked to an increased risk of gastric cancer (Wu *et al.*, 2023). In Pará, a worrying rise in gastric cancer incidence has been observed, potentially related to shifts in eating habits, particularly increased fast food consumption. These foods, rich in fats, sodium, and preservatives, are classified as potential carcinogens by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). This study analyzes gastric cancer incidence in Pará between 2021 and 2024, seeking to identify possible correlations with the expansion of fast food consumption, based on data from INCA, DataSUS, and WHO. **Objectives:** To present the incidence of gastric cancer in Pará from 2021 to 2024 and assess the relationship between the increase in fast food establishments and cancer occurrence, aiming to inform intervention projects within the Unified Health System (SUS). **Methods:** This cross-sectional study used secondary, publicly available data from DataSUS (SIM) and the National Cancer Institute (INCA) on gastric cancer cases (ICD-10: C16) in Pará from 2021 to 2024. Data on fast food chain growth were sourced from the Pará Economic Development Agency (ADEPARA) and the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA). Raw, non-normalized data were employed, limiting the analysis. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 26, with significance set at 5% ($p < 0.05$). Ethical approval was not required due to the use of aggregated public data, in accordance with Resolution No. 510/2016 of the Brazilian National Health Council. **Results:** Between 2021 and 2023, gastric cancer diagnoses increased by 19.1% in Pará (INCA, 2023). Simultaneously, fast food chains grew by 35% (ADEPARA, 2024), suggesting a potential association. Statistical analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.62$; $p < 0.05$) between the number of fast food establishments and gastric cancer incidence. Furthermore, epidemiological data show that 68% of diagnosed patients reported consuming fast food two or more times weekly (VIGITEL/DataSUS,

2023), supporting the hypothesis of a link between poor diet and cancer risk. **Conclusion:**

This study aimed to explore the relationship between the growth of the fast food sector and rising gastric cancer incidence in Pará. The findings indicate a possible association; however, causality cannot be confirmed due to the cross-sectional design and use of raw data. Future research should focus on longitudinal cohort studies and systematic literature reviews to verify whether these trends align with other regional or global patterns. Such investigations are crucial to support effective public health policies for cancer prevention and the promotion of healthy eating habits.

Keywords: Gastric cancer; Risk factors; Fast food.