



## CARMEN Country Profiles: Curaçao



Chronic noncommunicable diseases (CNCDs) also affect the islands of the Netherland Antilles and some chronic conditions, especially obesity, put a great burden on the islands' policy-making and health care system. The chronic diseases with the highest prevalence are arthrosis and arthritis, hypertension, and diabetes. Complications of hypertension and diabetes are the major causes of morbidity and disability, especially among the African and Indian population. Obesity is associated several medical conditions: poor health status, coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes and hypertension.

Obesity is becoming a major health problem in Curaçao<sup>1</sup>, especially among women and more so, among women of low socioeconomic status.

Sedentary lifestyle is one of the risk factors for Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) on the island. Men, overall, exercise more than women; however, only a third of them engage in regular physical activity.

Daily fruit and vegetable consumption is very low in Curaçao, the reasons for this are various: high price and limited supply of fresh products, as well as negative attitudes towards eating fruits and vegetables.

The island is preparing to implement a concerted action to tackle diabetes, hypertension, sedentary lifestyle, unhealthy diet and obesity. Policy-makers are also working on providing better care for elderly citizens and increasing the number of specialized health professionals.

<sup>1</sup> Pan American Health Organization. *Health Situation in the Americas: Basic Indicators*. 2003.

Studies on the Antillean health status were implemented in order to collect data for health policy building. The same methodology was adopted to survey the five islands. There were face-to-face interviews with a standardized questionnaire, plus height, weight, waist and hip measurements. The fieldwork in Curaçao was carried out in 1993–1994 for 10 months. The sample comprised 2,248 people and obtained a response rate of 85.3%.

In 2003, a workshop on integrated NCD Prevention and Control was held in Curaçao, with the aim of discussing the main lines of action and strategies of a *Plan of Action for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases*.