

## Extended Abstract

<b>Paper Title</b>	<b>Obesity, non-communicable diseases and unhealthy food imports in Italy</b>
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**Abstract prepared for presentation at the 98th Annual Conference of The Agricultural Economics Society will be held at The University of Edinburgh, UK, 18th - 20th March 2024.**

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>200 words max</b>
<p>The purpose of the work is to investigate the effects of Italian food imports on some relevant health diseases connected with food consumption. The paper examines the impact of healthy and unhealthy food imports on health diseases, at NUTS3 region level and over the period 2004-2019. Results show a positive impact of the imports of unhealthy food on obesity. The distinction between EU and non EU exporter countries limits to the extra-EU countries these positive effects of 'unhealthy food' imports on obesity.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b>	Trade, Obesity, Unhealthy food
<b>JEL Code</b>	F60, F61, I10, I12 see: <a href="http://www.aeaweb.org/jel/guide/jel.php?class=Q">www.aeaweb.org/jel/guide/jel.php?class=Q</a> )
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>100 – 250 words</b>
<p>The shift to new patterns of unhealthy eating is contributing to a growing incidence of obesity, that is one of the key risk factors for many non-communicable diseases (NCDs - e.g., diabetes, cardiovascular diseases) historically seen in high-income countries. Among unhealthy food, the processed foods high in refined starch, sugar, salt and unhealthy fats are often easily available and cheap, representing one of several drivers of global NCD costs.</p>	
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>100 – 250 words</b>
<p>Following the procedure proposed by Autor et al (2013) and Giuntella et al (2020) we measure Italian food imports at NUTS3 region by using the shift-share approach. Specifically, we allocate the national food imports across 111 Italian provinces by means of the share of food household expenditure.</p> <p>Household consumption on food products come from the Italian national statistical institute (ISTAT) household consumption expenditure Database. These data follow the Classification of Individual Consumption by product (ECOICOP 5-digit) and report estimate of mean monthly consumption expenditure for households. We use the (product) average annual data at both provincial (NUTS3 level) and national level.</p>	

Trade data come from BACI CEPI, using the 1996 Harmonized System (HS) nomenclature at 6-digit level. Data, reported in US dollars are converted to euro, using Purchasing power parity conversion factor of the World Bank International Comparison Program database, and aggregated from HS to ECOICOP nomenclature.

The final NUTS3 food imports distinguish the two aggregate healthy and unhealthy food, as well as the main four categories of unhealthy food (alcoholic products, or those high in sugar, fat and salt). This distinction is made following USDA Dietary Guidelines and other unhealthy product categories reported in literature (e.g. Ravuvu et al 2021).

Finally, health diseases data come from the Health Search database managed by the Italian Society of General Practitioners (S.I.M.G.) and the Centre of Economic and International Studies of Tor Vergata University (CEIS). The database contains detailed information on clinical diagnoses, aggregated at NUTS3-level, from 2004 to 2019.

Regional socio-economic characteristics are included as controls (source: ISTAT).

<b>Results</b>	<b>100 – 250 words</b>
<p>Estimated results distinguish the impact of 1) total food imports, 2) healthy/unhealthy food imports, 3) (healthy and) unhealthy food imported from EU and non-EU countries, 4) (healthy and) unhealthy food imports splitted in its four main groups (alcoholic, rich in sugar, in fat, highly processed and salty products).</p> <p>Preliminary results show a positive impact on obesity of total food imports but then limited to imports of unhealthy food. The distinction between EU and non EU exporter countries seems to limit on extra-EU countries these positive effects of 'unhealthy food' imports on obesity.</p>	
<b>Discussion and Conclusion</b>	<b>100 – 250 words</b>
<p>To be concluded.</p>	