

Study links ultra-processed foods to premature deaths

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Following the recent published in the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#), linking the consumption of ultra-processed foods (UPFs) to premature mortality, with a linear association between ultra-processed food consumption and all-cause mortality, SAFE would like to comment:

*"More and more studies are proving the negative health impacts of ultra-processed foods, as SAFE and others have been warning over the years. Not only are the degrees of processing relevant, but also the overlap between UPFs and foods high in fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS foods), due to the additives most UPFs contain. This is a very dangerous combination, and it poses a serious health risk. The EU and Member States must address this risk through regulatory and fiscal policy", said **Luigi Tozzi, Deputy director of SAFE.***

The study analysed 8 countries with different levels of UPF consumption: Brazil and Colombia (low), Chile and Mexico (intermediate), and Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US, where consumption levels are high and UPFs alone account for more than half of calorie intake.

Tozzi said: *"There are already other markets where governments have implemented very strict regulations on ultra-processed foods, such as Brazil, Argentina, the UK, or New Zealand. In those countries, the food industry has already adapted to these new, healthier standards, so the question is: if it can be done in other markets, why not in the EU? The industry should inform the European Commission of measures that are technically feasible and can have an immediate positive impact. There is no time to waste."*

The AJPM study found a linear association between ultra-processed food consumption and all-cause mortality, ranging from 4% to 14% of premature deaths, depending on the UPF consumption levels in the different countries.

SAFE has repeatedly warned against the risks of ultra-processed foods. [SAFE's Annual Conference from November 2024 highlighted the findings of the MoliSani project](#), which found an increased risk of all-cause and cardiovascular mortality, based on a cohort study on 24,000 people in Molise, Italy.