Objective to investigate the association between body mass index (BMI) and fruit juice intake in Brazilian adults.

Method The Telephone Survey System for the Surveillance of Risk and Protective Factors for Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (VIGITEL) is conducted every year since 2006. In 2008 was added a question regarding fruit juice intake. We analysed 2008 and 2009 data including 89,841 adults (20–65 years) from 27 Brazilian cities investigated. Weighted regression analyses included sex, age (years), schooling (years), level of physical activity (active/inactive) as independent variables, and BMI (kg/m²) as the dependent variable. Eating habits were evaluated based on the daily frequency of intake of fruit juices, fruits, vegetables and sugar-sweetened soft drinks.

Results Fifty-three percent of the participants were female, mean age was 57.2 years, mean BMI was 25 kg/m², and 19% reported a daily intake of fruit juice. BMI was negatively and significantly associated with fruit juice intake (β=-0.29; p-value <0.0001 for women; β=-0.23; p-value=0.0004 for men). There is a small negative association of fruit juice intake with soft drinks consumption and inactivity. After adjustment for sex, age, schooling, level of physical activity, intake of fruits, vegetables and soft drinks this association remained statistically significant (β=-0.10; p-value=0.05).

Conclusion Among Brazilian adults fruit juice intake may be a marker of healthier eating habits.