

LOW PREVALENCE OF OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS AT A UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract. Obesity is a growing public health concern. Lifestyle modifications should be aggressively promoted in communities, with health care professionals expected to be role models of healthy living. A cross-sectional study using proportionate stratified sampling of medical students ($n = 179$) attending a university in Malaysia revealed prevalence rate of overweight and obesity was 22% and 11%, respectively, based on cut-off points for the Asian population. These values are significantly lower compared to the national prevalence of the same age group conducted in the same year. Among the factors investigated using multivariate logistic regression indicated male gender significantly predicted the odds of being obese or overweight, while other factors, such as race, fiber consumption, sleeping hours, sedentary activity, stress, phase of study, fast food accessibility and late-night snacking were not associated with obesity. Larger scale studies should be carried out to investigate obesogenic tendencies of medical students and prospective studies to explore risk factors in the development of obesity among all medical students.

Keywords: obesity, overweight, prevalence, risk factor, medical student, Malaysia

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