

A cross-sectional study on the effect of obesity on mental health among adults in Selangor, Malaysia

Vnesh Malliah Naidu, Lai Xin Wei, Buvanish Arumugam, Mohamed Luqman Amal Che Ab Azhar, Lavaney Murugappan, Thamilvaani Manaharan

Faculty of Medicine, University of Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Health is significantly influenced by nutrition, with historical repercussions of malnutrition leading to a notable impact on human well-being. Both undernutrition and overnutrition have contributed to increased illness and mortality rates. Obesity, characterized by excessive fatty tissue, has become increasingly prevalent worldwide. **Objectives:** This study aims to ascertain the prevalence of obesity, explore the association between sociodemographic factors and BMI status, investigate the impact of obesity on an individual's mental health status, and examine the relationship between food habits and obesity among adults in Selangor, Malaysia. **Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional study spanning two years was conducted in Selangor, Malaysia. Exponential discriminative snowball sampling was utilized for data collection, targeting residents aged 18 to 40 proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English. **Results:** Of the 256 respondents obtained, 244 fully met the inclusion criteria. Findings revealed that the prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults in Selangor, Malaysia, stood at 29.92% and 11.06%, respectively. **Conclusion:** A chi-square test indicated significant associations between BMI status and factors such as age, ethnicity, occupation, marital status, and smoking status ($p < 0.05$). However, no association was found between gender, nationality, household monthly income, education level, and BMI status ($p > 0.05$). Notably, an individual's body weight showed associations with mental health status (depression, anxiety, and stress) ($p < 0.05$), with an association observed between food habits and obesity ($p < 0.05$).