



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH THE
PHYSICAL HEALTH STATUS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN
THE KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA**

NURUL IZZAH BINTI ABDUL SAMAD

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HEALTH STATUS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN
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By

NURUL IZZAH BINTI ABDUL SAMAD

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH THE PHYSICAL HEALTH STATUS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA

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January 2011

Chairman: Prof Zailina binti Hashim, PhD

Faculty: Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Recent studies have shown that school's physical and social environment can influence teachers' health. This study determined the mental health status and its association with the physical health status among primary school teachers in the Klang Valley. Mental health status comprised the assessment of mental health and stress levels while the physical health status includes low back pain and respiratory symptoms.

A cross sectional study was carried out in nine primary schools in the Klang Valley. The schools have been stratified according to urban, industrial and rural areas and randomly selected from a list obtained from the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Two hundred and seventy two respondents who fulfilled the study criteria volunteered to participate in the study. Self-administered questionnaires consisting of five sections, including demographic background, mental health assessment (General Health Questionnaire),

work stress levels (Teacher Stress Inventory Questionnaire), low back pain (modified Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire) and respiratory symptoms (American Thoracic Society Questionnaire) were distributed to the teachers.

Study results showed that only 12.1% of the respondents had low mental health status and most of them experienced moderate work stress level (71.7%). Student misbehavior was the main stressor in the school environment. The prevalence of low back pain was 40.4% among the respondents. Lifting load (28.0%) was presumed by the respondents as the main factor that contributed to low back pain, followed by prolonged sitting (25.2%). Meanwhile, prevalence of cough (35.7%), phlegm (21.4%) and chest pain (8.3%) were highest in industrial school teachers; while wheezing (15.7%) and asthma (11.6%) were highest in urban school teachers. Mental health status has a direct significant association with work stress ($p=0.018$). Gender ($p=0.001$) and workload ($p=0.002$) were significant contributing factors to the mental health status. Poor mental health influenced the low back pain and respiratory symptoms significantly (OR 1.11, 95% CI 1.06-1.15; OR 1.09, 95% CI 1.04-1.15, respectively).

These primary school teachers experienced medium level of stress. Gender and workload could influence the teachers to experience poor mental health. Teachers with poor mental health status had higher risk of developing low back pain and respiratory symptoms.

Keywords: *Mental Health Status, Work Stress, Low Back Pain, Respiratory Symptoms, Primary School Teachers*

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

STATUS KESIHATAN MENTAL DAN KAITANNYA DENGAN STATUS KESIHATAN FIZIKAL GURU SEKOLAH RENDAH DI LEMBAH KLANG, MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Kajian terkini telah menunjukkan bahawa persekitaran fizikal dan sosial sekolah boleh mempengaruhi kesihatan guru. Kajian ini menentukan tahap kesihatan mental dan perkaitannya dengan tahap kesihatan fizikal guru-guru sekolah rendah di Lembah Klang. Tahap kesihatan mental terdiri daripada penilaian kesihatan mental dan pengukuran paras tekanan manakala kesihatan fizikal meliputi sakit belakang bawah dan gejala pernafasan.

Satu kajian keratan rentas telah dijalankan di sembilan buah sekolah rendah di Lembah Klang. Sekolah-sekolah ini dipilih secara rawak dari kawasan bandar, industri dan luar bandar berdasarkan senarai yang diperoleh daripada Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia. Dua ratus tujuh puluh dua responden yang memenuhi kriteria yang ditetapkan telah terlibat secara sukarela dalam kajian ini. Satu set borang soal selidik yang dikendalikan sendiri diberikan kepada responden dan ia terbahagi kepada lima bahagian, iaitu latar

belakang demografik, penilaian status kesihatan mental (*General Health Questionnaire*), tekanan (*Teacher Stress Inventory*), masalah sakit belakang bawah yang berdasarkan *Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire* dan simptom permasalahan pernafasan (*American Thoracic Society*).

Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa 12.1% responden mempunyai tahap kesihatan mental yang rendah dan kebanyakannya mengalami tahap tekanan kerja yang sederhana (71.7%). Salah laku pelajar adalah punca utama bagi tekanan dalam persekitaran sekolah. Seramai 40.4% guru melaporkan mengalami sakit belakang bawah. Mengangkat beban (28.0%) pula dianggap sebagai aktiviti utama yang menyumbang terhadap sakit belakang bawah, diikuti dengan duduk terlalu lama (25.2%). Sementara itu, guru di kawasan industri melaporkan prevalens yang tinggi bagi masalah batuk (35.7%), kahak (21.4%) dan sakit dada (8.3%) manakala guru di kawasan bandar pula menunjukkan kadar prevalens yang tinggi bagi masalah nafas berbunyi (15.7%) dan asma (11.6%). Status kesihatan mental mempunyai perhubungan terus yang signifikan dengan paras tekanan kerja ($p=0.018$). Jantina ($p=0.001$) dan beban tugas ($p=0.002$) terbukti secara signifikan sebagai faktor penyumbang terhadap tahap kesihatan mental guru. Tahap kesihatan mental yang rendah pula terbukti secara signifikan menjadi faktor penyumbang bagi masalah sakit belakang bawah dan gejala pernafasan (OR 1.11, 95% CI 1.06-1.15; OR 1.09, 95% CI 1.04-1.15, secara berurutan).

Guru-guru sekolah rendah mempunyai masalah tekanan kerja yang sederhana. Faktor jantina dan beban kerja mampu menyumbang kepada penurunan tahap kesihatan mental

para guru. Guru yang mempunyai tahap kesihatan mental yang rendah berisiko tinggi untuk menghadapi masalah sakit belakang bawah dan gejala pernafasan.

Kata kunci: *Tahap Kesihatan Mental, Tekanan Kerja, Sakit Belakang Bawah, Gejala Pernafasan, Guru Sekolah Rendah*



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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 4 January 2011 to conduct the final examination of Nurul Izzah Binti Haji Abdul Samad on her thesis entitled “Mental Health Status and Its Association with the Physical Health Status of Primary School Teachers in the Klang Valley, Malaysia” in accordance with Universities and University College Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

NURUL IZZAH BINTI ABDUL SAMAD

Date: 4 January 2011

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