

The prevalence and factors associated with obesity among adult women in Selangor, Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The prevalence of obesity in developing countries especially among women is on the rise. This matter should be taken seriously because it can burden the health care systems and lower the quality of life. **Aim:** The purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence of obesity among adult women in Selangor and to determine factors associated with obesity among these women. **Methods:** This community based cross sectional study was conducted in Selangor in January 2004. Multi stage stratified proportionate to size sampling method was used. Women aged 20–59 years old were included in this study. Data was collected using a questionnaire-guided interview method. The questionnaire consisted of questions on socio-demographic (age, ethnicity, religion, education level, occupation, monthly income, marital status), Obstetric & Gynaecology history, body mass index (BMI), and the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). **Results:** Out of 1032 women, 972 agreed to participate in this study, giving a response rate of 94.2%. The mean age was 37.91 ± 10.91 . The prevalence of obesity among the respondents was 16.7% (mean = 1.83 ± 0.373). Obesity was found to be significantly associated with age ($p = 0.013$), ethnicity ($p = 0.001$), religion ($p = 0.002$), schooling ($p = 0.020$), educational level ($p = 0.016$), marital status ($p = 0.001$) and the history of suffering a miscarriage within the past 6 months ($p = 0.023$). **Conclusion:** The prevalence of obesity among adult women in this study was high. This problem needs to be emphasized as the prevalence of obesity keeps increasing, and will continue to worsen unless appropriate preventive measures are taken.