

## **Nutritional status of school children receiving Supplementary Feeding Program in Peninsular Malaysia**

### **ABSTRACT**

A total of 2541 school children comprising of 1265 students who were given the School Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) and 1276 who were not given SFP (non-SFP) aged between 7-12 years, from Central and Southern regions of Peninsular Malaysia were involved in the study. Anthropometric measurements (weight, height and triceps skinfold) and their 24-hour dietary record were assessed. Results showed that SFP subjects had a lower mean body weight ( $26.9 \pm 7.7$  kg), height ( $130.7 \pm 10.0$  cm) and triceps skinfold (TSF) thickness ( $9.8 \pm 3.8$  mm) than non-SFP subjects with mean body weight  $29.3 \pm 9.2$  kg, height  $132.9 \pm 10.4$  cm and TSF thickness  $10.8 \pm 4.6$  mm. Chinese subjects had the highest mean body weight ( $28.7 \pm 7.9$  kg), height ( $132.9 \pm 10.3$  cm) and TSF thickness ( $10.3 \pm 3.7$  mm) amongst the SFP subjects, as well as amongst non-SFP subjects with mean body weight  $31.1 \pm 9.3$  kg, height  $135.4 \pm 10.3$  cm and TSF thickness  $11.5 \pm 4.9$  mm. This study also showed the persistence of underweight, stunting and wasting amongst these primary school children. The prevalence of underweight amongst SFP and non-SFP subjects were 14.6% and 10.0% respectively. The prevalence of stunting was 12.6% for SFP and 7.4% for non-SFP, while wasting was found in 11.1% for SFP and 9.5% for non-SFP. The prevalence of overweight amongst SFP and non-SFP subjects were 1.3% and 4.5% respectively. Overall, only intake of protein, vitamin A and vitamin C met the RDI in all subjects for both SFP and non-SFP. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there is a need for the Food Supplementation Program to be continuously implemented in primary schools to ensure that they will get enough food to sustain their energy.

**Keyword:** Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP); School children; Nutritional status