

A25 Associations of socio-demographic factors, parental height, feeding practices and child eating behaviours with stunting among children aged 6 to 36 months in Malaysia

Nur Fatimah MS, Nurul Aina Amirah MZ, Wong HJ and Chin YS

Department of Nutrition, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Stunting can be defined as the condition whereby the child's height is too short for their age. Stunting in early life can have an impact on a child's cognitive, physical, psychosocial, and affective development. This cross-sectional study aimed to determine the associations of socio-demographic factors, parental height, parental feeding practices, and child eating behaviours with stunting among children aged 6 to 36 months in Malaysia. A total of 244 children and their parents from all states in Malaysia (50.8% boys and 49.2% girls), with a mean age of 15.56 ± 8.46 months, were recruited through local government health clinics and social media groups that comprised parents. A set of online self-administered questionnaire on socio-demographic characteristics, infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, and child eating behaviours were completed by the parents of the children. Height of both father and mother were self-reported, and the child's height was acquired from their health record books. Results showed that the prevalence of stunting was 16.4% (Boy: 18.5%; Girl: 14.2%). Further, a higher percentage of short fathers (with height less than 165cm) were associated with a higher prevalence of children that were stunting (53.1%) as compared to normal height fathers (14.4%) ($\chi^2=4.421$, $p<0.05$), whereby average height of fathers in the present study was 170.46 ± 7.13 cm. However, height of mother was not significantly associated with stunting among children ($\chi^2=2.258$, $p=0.323$). Bivariate analyses also showed that no significant associations between socio-demographic factors with stunting. No significant associations were found in terms of infant and young child feeding (IYCF) indicators and stunting. In conclusion, 16.4% children were stunted, and height of father was associated with stunting among children. Future studies need to explore more variables related to fathers to determine the factors associated with stunting in Malaysian children.