

A37 Diet quality and other factors influencing body weight changes during COVID-19 pandemic among low-income adults in Selangor, Malaysia

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Both modifiable and non-modifiable factors can contribute to the fluctuation of body weight. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had altered the lifestyle and brought along the new norms since 2020. In Malaysia, the implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO), hit the economy harshly and therefore affected the low-income adults or the B40 households the most. With such, this cross-sectional study aimed to determine the associations between sociodemographic factors, lifestyle factors, emotional factors, and body weight changes during the COVID-19 pandemic among low-income adults. A total of 142 respondents were included in the analysis with the majority of them were female, Chinese, and students at the mean age of 28.73 ± 8.26 years. About 84.4% of the respondents ($n=141$) experienced weight changes during this pandemic with more than half of them (51.1%) gained weight while another 33.3% of them lost weight. It was found that age ($r=-0.226$, $p=0.007$) and gender ($\chi^2=11.000$, $p=0.004$) were significantly associated with body weight changes at which female who was at a younger age tended to experience weight change. Meanwhile, 'fruits' ($r=-0.200$, $p=0.026$) and 'sugar-rich foods' ($r=0.317$, $p=0.038$) from the diet quality index had found to be significantly correlated to the overall body weight changes and weight loss respectively. Stress was also significantly and positively correlated with overall body weight changes ($r=0.180$, $p=0.045$); a significant correlation was found between stress and 'sugar-rich foods' score ($r=-0.209$, $p=0.020$). In conclusion, majority of the respondents experienced weight change during the pandemic. Those who were females, at a younger age, consumed fewer fruits and more sugary fruits as well as in stress were more likely to experience either weight gain or weight loss.