

A40 Food security and its association with children's eating behaviour during the Movement Control Order

Sharmilla R and Tan ST

Department of Healthcare Professional, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Management and Science University

The Federal Government of Malaysia has implemented the Movement Control Order (MCO) to curb the spread of COVID-19 virus. It is speculated that job and income losses during the enforcement of MCO may heighten the risk of food insecurity. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate food security and its associations with eating behaviour of Malaysian children during MCO. A total of 145 parents of children aged 2 to 11 years old were recruited into this study using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling method. Parents were required to fill up a web-based survey consisting of socio-demographic characteristics, Radimer/Cornell Hunger and Food Insecurity Instrument and Child Eating Behaviour Questionnaire (CEBQ). Data analysis were conducted using IBM SPSS version 26. Independent sample t-test was used to investigate mean difference, while the correlation between food security and children's eating behaviour during the MCO was assessed with Point Biserial Correlation test. The prevalence of household food security was 64.8%, while the prevalence of child hunger was 29.6%. Children living in food insecure households had significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) enjoyment of food (EF), emotional overeating (EOE), food responsiveness (FR) and emotional undereating (EUE) mean scores than its counterpart. On the contrary, children living in food secure households attained a significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) score in slowness in eating (SE). Current findings showed that there was a significant moderate positive correlation ($r_{pbis} = 0.333$, $p < 0.05$) between household food insecurity and food approach behaviour. All in all, the prevalence of household food insecurity and child hunger were higher during the MCO. Children from food insecure households attained a better mean score in food approach behaviour in the time of COVID-19 pandemic.