

ABSTRACTS FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity among Schoolchildren in Kota Kinabalu District: An Overview

Haslezah Saelih

Master of Public Health (MPH),
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences,
Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu,
Sabah, Malaysia

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Background: Childhood obesity poses global public health threat and has risen to an alarming level throughout the world. Environmental factors, lifestyle preferences and culture play important roles in the rising prevalence of obesity worldwide. Overweight children are more likely to be overweight or obese in their adulthood and therefore are at greater risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic ailments. Children occasionally become overweight on account of medical or genetic conditions. The main cause relates to poor dietary habits, inactivity or a combination of these factors. These situations also pose an emerging public health issue in Asia. **Objective:** To identify the prevalence of overweight and obesity among schoolchildren in Kota Kinabalu District. **Methods:** A brief descriptive epidemiology study was conducted using the raw dataset of the year 2017 from School Health Unit, Kota Kinabalu District Health Office. The prevalence rate of overweight and obesity among 24,131 schoolchildren aged 6 – 15 years old in Kota Kinabalu District was calculated (based on WHO 2007 growth reference). **Results:** Majority of the students have normal weight status (74%) while 19% are overweight and obese. Based on the school category, the Primary 6 students have the highest prevalence of overweight and obesity (22.2%), followed by the Form 3 (17.1%), Primary 1 (13.9%) and pre-school students (13.4%).

Conclusion: The prevalence of overweight and obesity among schoolchildren in 2017 of Kota Kinabalu District is comparatively higher with the previous studies. Integrated approach which includes health education and awareness programme, empowerment

of the Parent-Teacher Associations and enforcement of the current initiatives and guidelines will be able to combat the overweight and obesity issues among schoolchildren.