DIETARY HABITS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES AMONG CONSUMERS IN SELECTED SHOPPING MALLS IN GEORGETOWN, PENANG

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ABSTRACT

Dietary habits and physical activity play a fundamental part in influencing body weight and in contributing to the total quality of life. The objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between dietary habits and physical activity among consumers in selected shopping malls in Georgetown, Penang with body mass index (BMI). Dietary habits and physical activity data from 325 consumers were collected via mall intercept survey and anthropometric measurements were taken. The mean BMI measurement was 22.03 ± 3.04 kg/m² and the overall prevalence of overweight and obesity was 21.2% and 15.1%, respectively. There was significant association between weight status and gender ($p<0.01$). Majority of the respondents rated their health status as “good” and they are somewhat satisfied with their overall health status and healthfulness of the diet. Breakfast was the most frequent skipped meal (32.92%) among the respondents. More than one third of the respondents (36.31%) often consumed fast food 4 to 6 times in a week. Yet, about half of the respondents were less likely to snack in a week. The mean BMI was highest for those who consumed fast food everyday and those who snack most frequently. Nevertheless, breakfast consumption patterns, frequency of fast food consumption and snacking habits were not differed significantly with BMI ($p>0.05$). Majority of the respondents were moderate active and physical activity level was inversely associated with BMI. Also, no significant difference found between physical activity level and BMI in this study. Results from this study suggest that healthy eating habits and adequate physical activity are important for a healthy BMI.