

B13 Frequency of home cooking and its implications on food insecurity and diet diversity among Malaysian working adults in the middle-income group during the pandemic: A cross sectional pilot study

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As more time is spent at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency of home cooking has increased. Studies have reported a link between home cooking frequency, food insecurity and diet diversity, however, these were conducted in western and Middle Eastern countries. The frequency of home cooking, food insecurity and diet diversity among Malaysian working population belonging to the middle-income group (M40) during pandemic is currently unknown. This study was conducted to determine the association between the frequency of home cooking with individual food insecurity and diet diversity among M40 Malaysian working adults during the pandemic. This was an online cross-sectional study. A total of 57 M40 Malaysian working participants aged between 21 to 60 participated in the study. An online survey was distributed to the participants. A 24-hour dietary recall was also conducted using an online questionnaire. Chi-square test was performed to test the association between frequency of home cooking, food insecurity and diet diversity. The majority of M40 working individuals had a high frequency of home cooking (40.4%), a moderate diet diversity score (59.6%) and were food secure during the COVID-19 pandemic (87.7%). There was no significant association between the frequency of home cooking and diet diversity ($p>0.05$). Food insecurity was higher (19.0%) among those who cooked three times or lesser per week, whereas food insecurity was lower among those who cooked more than six times per week (13.0%). This study suggests that the frequency of home cooking had no effect on food diversity. Most of the M40 Malaysian working adults were food secure and those who cooked at home less frequently were more likely to be food insecure. However, further studies with larger sample size are required to validate the findings and to determine how other factors may have impacted food insecurity and diet diversity during the pandemic.