

B18 Frequency of home cooking, food insecurity and diet diversity among Malaysian working adults during the pandemic: A cross-sectional study among the urban low-income group

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, people spent more time at home, which increased the frequency of home cooking. Prior research has found a link between home cooking frequency, food insecurity, and diet diversity, however, these research were mainly from Western and Middle Eastern countries. During the pandemic, the frequency of home cooking, food insecurity, and diet diversity among the bottom-income group (B40) Malaysian working people remain unknown. The objective was to determine the association between home cooking frequency and individual food insecurity and diet diversity among B40 working adults in Malaysia during the pandemic. An online questionnaire was used to collect data for this cross-sectional study. A total of 114 subjects, ranging from 21 to 60 years, were recruited and completed an online survey. A 24-hour diet recall was performed online. Chi-square test was used to test the relationship between home cooking frequency, food insecurity, and diet diversity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, majority of B40 working adults had a low frequency of home cooking (64.0%) of less than 3 times a week, a moderate diet diversity score (55.3%) and were food insecure (70.2%). There was no significant association between frequency of home cooking and diet diversity ($p=0.989$). Participants who had low frequency of home cooking had higher food insecurity (47.4%) compared to high frequency of home cooking (12.3%). The findings revealed that food diversity was not influenced by home cooking frequency. Food insecurity affected the majority of Malaysian working adults in the B40 group, although those who cooked at home less frequently were more likely to be severely food insecure. More research is needed to ascertain other factors that may have influenced food insecurity and diet diversity during the outbreak among the lower socioeconomic group.