

A42 Comparison of food insecurity and the risk of eating disorders by relative weight change status of Malaysian youths throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the worst pandemic that the world is experiencing. The Movement Control Order is necessary to prevent the spread of viruses. However, the lockdown may have an impact on food security, eating behaviour, and body weight. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the comparison of food insecurity status and eating disorder risk status with the relative weight change status of Malaysian youths throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Demographics, socio-economic, body height, body weight during MCO 3.0 and the current body weight were self-reported by the respondents. The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) was used to assess the food security status, whereas the Eating Attitude Test-26 (EAT-26) was used to determine the risk of eating disorders. A total of 208 respondents were included in the study. The prevalence of moderate-to-severe food insecurity was 30.7%, while 18.8% were reported to be at risk of eating disorders. In regards to the relative weight change, 22.2% of youths gained weight throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with a mean and standard deviation of $8.94 \pm 5.61\%$ of their body weight. No significant association was observed between food security status and relative weight change ($\chi^2=4.47$, $p=0.347$). However, the risk of eating disorders was associated with relative weight change status ($\chi^2=6.12$, $p=0.047$). The COVID-19 pandemic worsens food insecurity and increases the risk of eating disorders in Malaysian youths. There is a need for prevention programs implemented within multiple sectors that are targeted to Malaysian youths to lower the risk of eating disorders as well as improving their food security.