

C12 Assessing consumer awareness on nutrition information on food labels: A cross-sectional study in Kota Kinabalu

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The Malaysian Dietary Guidelines 2020 recommend making effective use of nutrition information on food labels in choosing healthier food products. However, the extent of consumers living in Kota Kinabalu read and utilise these information has not been previously examined. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the awareness of consumers in Kota Kinabalu on nutrition information on food labels. This was a cross-sectional study involving 145 adults living in Kota Kinabalu recruited via convenient sampling, conducted from September 2021 to February 2022. A validated questionnaire was used to assess the subjects' awareness of the nutrition information on food labels, and descriptive analysis and Chi-square test were used for statistical analyses. One-hundred thirty-four (92.4%) subjects reported that they knew and were aware of the nutrition information on food labels, particularly ingredient list (89.0%) and nutrition information panel (80.0%). Similarly, the ingredient list was the most common (nutrition information utilised by the subjects, followed by the nutrition information panel (71.7%), front-of-pack (55.2%), healthier choice logo (52.4%), and nutrition claims (51.0%). Total sugar (25.5%) was the most common nutrient in the nutrition information panel referred by the subjects, followed by total fat (23.3%), and carbohydrate (17.9%). Majority of the subjects reported that they knew the nutrition information on food labels from schools (41.4%) and social media (21.4%). Education level was significantly associated ($p=0.013$) with the awareness of nutrition information on food labels while other sociodemographic factors such as sex, age, ethnicity, and marital status showed non-significance (all $p>0.05$). Although most consumers in Kota Kinabalu reported utilising nutrition information on food labels, it was limited to the ingredient list and nutrition information panel. More effort could be done to promote the utilisation of front-of-pack, healthier choice logo, and nutrition claims during purchasing food products, and schools and social media appear to be a strategic approach.