A38   The association between health literacy and body mass index among type 2 diabetes mellitus patients in Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia: A cross-sectional study

Nurul IMZ, Maisarah SA and Divya V

Dietetics Programme, School of Health Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia

The aim of this study is to explore the association between health literacy and body mass index (BMI) among type 2 diabetes mellitus patients. A cross sectional study was conducted among 96 type 2 diabetes mellitus patients aged 18 years old and above using convenience sampling technique in Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia (Hospital USM). The translated and validated version of European Health Literacy Survey Questionnaire 16 (HLS-EU-Q16) was used to assess health literacy. Data on the participants' socio-demographic characteristics were collected and anthropometry measurements were taken from the medical folder to calculate their BMI. Out of 96 subjects, 58 subjects (60.4%) had sufficient health literacy whereas the mean BMI of the subjects was 28.59 kg/m^2 (*SD*=6.17), which was classified within the overweight category. Meanwhile, a significant association was found in the median BMI with three health literacy levels (p=0.01) and it was contributed between the problematic and sufficient health literacy groups (p=0.009, <0.05). The most probable reason for sufficient health literacy finding in majority of subjects is due to good educational backgrounds, as 51.0% and 24.0% of the subjects were at secondary and tertiary levels, respectively. The current study also showed significant association between median BMI and health literacy which demonstrated that the interaction between health literacy and BMI is more multifaceted rather than just direct effect which may influenced by dietary behaviour, physical activity, numeracy skills, motivation and social support. The findings of this study indicates that health literacy may be a predictor for BMI, but there might be other stronger determinants apart from health literacy that could influence the BMI. Hence, it is recommended that further studies be conducted to elucidate the relationship and improve the health outcomes of T2DM patients.