

B43 Associations of sociodemographic and lifestyle factors with breakfast consumption among Malaysian university students during COVID-19 pandemic

Yau CM and Gan WY

Department of Nutrition, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

University students are vulnerable to unhealthy eating behaviours especially breakfast skipping due to their hectic lifestyles. Breakfast skipping has been linked with varieties of health problems such as obesity, dysmenorrhoea, and increased mortality rate due to circulatory system diseases. Therefore, this cross-sectional study aimed to investigate the factors associated with breakfast consumption among Malaysian university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 378 Malaysian undergraduates with a mean age of 21.85 ± 1.59 years participated in this study. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed online from July to August 2021 to collect sociodemographic information, breakfast consumption behaviour, physical activity level, internet addiction level, body image, depression, anxiety, and stress level, sleep quality and chronotype. Results showed that 37.8% of the respondents skipped breakfast with the most common reason of “wake up late” (54.8%). About 39.4% of them had low physical activity level, 36.8% of them were moderately to severely addicted to internet use and 79.7% of them had body image dissatisfaction. Some of them had severe levels of depression (21.2%), anxiety (29.4%) and stress (15.6%). About 62.2% of them were poor sleepers and 22.8% of them were evening type person. Significant associations were found between ethnicity ($\chi^2=37.03$, $p<0.001$), depression ($\chi^2=28.09$, $p<0.001$), anxiety ($\chi^2=12.27$, $p=0.015$), stress ($\chi^2=10.29$, $p=0.036$), chronotype ($\chi^2=32.46$, $p<0.001$) and sleep quality ($\chi^2=28.03$, $p<0.001$) with breakfast consumption behaviour. However, physical activity, internet addiction and body image dissatisfaction were not significantly associated with breakfast consumption ($p>0.05$). In conclusion, undergraduates in this study who are Malay, with high levels of depression, anxiety and stress, evening type as well as poor sleepers were more likely to skip breakfast. Therefore, effective nutrition intervention programmes are urgently needed to prevent unhealthy lifestyle behaviours and encourage regular breakfast consumption among university students.