

## Malaysia: Health and exercise statistics at a glance

### A. Malaysia: Healthy lifestyle campaign

- initiated by Ministry of Health Malaysia in 1991 with the slogan 'Love your heart'
- since then a yearly slogan was introduced.
- Malaysian Government has allocated RM22 million for the campaigns to raise the public's awareness of health issues.
- However, the Director of Health Malaysia (MOE, 19 April 2009) has revealed that the programmes fell short of achieving healthy Malaysian publics as 80 percent adults did not exercise and 30% suffered from obesity (Krishna Moorthy, Star April 5, 2006). And children below 5 yrs old were 15.7% underweight and 5.2% overweight (Star, 25 March 2001)
- 2008 (Star, Oct 24) 6 out of 10 Malaysian inactive
- 2009 (Star, April 18) 30% overweight, 30% obese

### B. A national research conducted by researchers from University Putra Malaysia (NST July 18, 2004)

- 1.7 million adult obese (1 mil Malays, 400,000 Chinese & 200, 200 Indians)
- 4.4% obese in 1996, 12.2% in 2004
- 1 million women; many stopped exercising after getting married
- Abundance food at home contributed to eating binges/sprees
- Malaysian becoming lazy & too comfortable
- Increase of affluence in urban societies led to the problem

In Malaysia, the prevalence of obesity among Malaysians aged 15 years and older was reported to be 11.7% in a national study. Obesity was found to be more prevalent among Malaysian females (13.8%) than males (9.6%). Its prevalence was highest among the Malays (13.6%) and Indians (13.5%), followed by the indigenous group of Sarawak (10.8%) and the Chinese (8.5%). (Rampal, Rampal & Khor et al., 2007)

## Research findings on physical activity participation

In Malaysia, Mohd Farid (2003) studied extreme games activities constraints among Universiti Putra Malaysia students and found main constraint to be 'lack of interest' (*Intrapersonal*), 'not enough time' (*Structural*) and 'feeling unsafe' (*Intrapersonal*). In another study, Siti Nurazimmah (2003) revealed that the main reasons youths did not participate in sports because of 'don't know where to learn' (*Intrapersonal*), 'overcrowded facilities' (*Structural*), 'physically unable to take part' (*Intrapersonal*) and 'cost of transportation' (*Structural*).

### Study 1

Constraints toward physical activities among working adults (2004)

Azizah Samhari & Wee Eng Hoe

72 subjects (Male=33, Female=39), majority 30-49 years old (72%), 21% below 30 & 6.9% aged 50 & above. Majority (77.8%) of respondents have participated in physical activity during their leisure time while 22.2% have not been involved in any leisure activities. Among those who participated, 39.1% preferred exercise activities, 20.7% were involved in individual sports like tennis, swimming and badminton. And 14.1% preferred to have creative, cultural and social activities as

their leisure activities. On partners to exercise with, 46.8% preferred family members or spouse as the person who accompanied them during activities. 40.3% preferred friends as their partner while 11.3% preferred to do leisure activities alone. On constraint factors, interpersonal was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> followed by structural and intrapersonal.

### Study 2

Motive & Constraint on leisure activities among students (2004)

*Nor Fizah & Wee Eng Hoe*

100 subjects (Male=47, female=53), majority 20-24 years old, 5% above 24 and 22% <20. Majority (77%) participated in physical activities. They ranked friendship and fun as the first two motives of participation. As for the constraints, structural was ranked first, followed by interpersonal and intrapersonal.

### Study 3

Motives & Constraints toward PA among working adults (2008)

*Ruhaifia Baba & Wee Eng Hoe*

205 subjects (Male=112, Female=93), majority 20-39 years old (67%), 32% 40 & above. Majority (85%) of respondents have participated in physical activity during their leisure time. Among those who participated in physical activities, 32% were involved in exercise activities, 34% in individual and team sport, 8% outdoor challenges, 10% in creative, cultural and social activities. 32.4% preferred family members or spouse as the person who accompanied them during activities. 54.9% preferred friends as their partner while 9.8% preferred to do leisure activities alone. On motive of participation, they ranked skill development, friendship and fitness as the top three participation motives. On constraint, structural constraint was ranked first, followed by interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints.

### Study 4

Exercise adherence among female (2009)

*Siti Maryam Mohd Kamil & Wee Eng Hoe*

200 subjects were studied. 52.5% aged 31-40 years old, 18.5% aged 41-45 and 29% aged 46 and above. 79% participated in physical activities; 37% in exercise activities, 20.2% in individual sport, 10.5% in outdoor leisure and 16.2% in creative, cultural and social activities. Of those who exercise, 34% preferred family members or spouse as the person who accompanied them during activities. 34% preferred friends as their partner while 11.5% preferred to do leisure activities alone.

### Study 5

Health behaviour and physical activity of adults (2009)

*Azrul Hizjah Ahmad Shaari*

130 subjects were studied (Male=74, Female=56). 26.8% was involved in exercise activities, 16.8% in team sport, 13.4% in individual sport, 13.1% in outdoor leisure, outdoor challenge 12.1% and 17.8% in creative, cultural and social activities. Of those who exercise, 27.7% preferred family members or spouse as the person who accompanied them during activities. 69.2% preferred friends as their partner while 3.1% preferred to do leisure activities alone.

Prepared by:

Assoc. Prof. Wee Eng Hoe, Ph.D., Tunku Abdul Rahman College, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

