Food Choices and Obesity in Urban Poor

UNIMAS Public Health Seminar 2019

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Outline

1. Obesity
2. Food Policy Framework for healthy diets and prevention of NCD
3. Current activities (information sharing)
Global obesity epidemic affecting >2 billion people  
(Caballero, 2019)

**Built environment**  
**Transportation**  
**Food production & marketing**
“Today’s food environments exploit people’s biological, psychological, social and economic vulnerabilities, making it easier for them to eat unhealthy food”.

(Roberto et al., 2015)
In 2017, 151 million (22%) children under 5 years of age were stunted (height-for-age < -2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards).

(Source: Global Health Observatory data repository, Geneva, WHO)


OF ADOLESCENTS IN MALAYSIA ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE

14.6% Overweight (BMI-for-age >+1SD to ≤+2SD) ;12.3% Obese (BMI-for-age >+2SD)

Preventing childhood obesity is the best way to reduce adult obesity and its comorbidities:
• exclusive breastfeeding
• appropriate infant and young child feeding
• healthy eating practices
• active living

(Caballero, 2019)
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<th>Domain</th>
<th>Policy Area</th>
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<td><strong>Food environment</strong></td>
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<td>Nutrition label standards and regulation on the use of claims and implied</td>
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<td>Use economic tools to address food affordability and purchase incentives</td>
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<td>Restrict food advertising and other forms of commercial promotion</td>
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<td>Improve the nutritional quality of the whole food supply</td>
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<td>Set incentives and rules to create a healthy retail and food service</td>
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<td><strong>Food systems</strong></td>
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<td>Harness the food supply chain and actions across sectors to ensure</td>
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<td>coherence with health</td>
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<td><strong>Behaviour change</strong></td>
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<td>Inform people about food and nutrition through public awareness</td>
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<td>Nutrition advice and counselling in health-care settings</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Give nutrition education and skills</td>
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(Source: World Cancer Research Fund International, NOURISHING FRAMEWORK)
Nutrition label standards and regulation on the use of claims and implied claims on foods

(Source: Food Safety and Quality Division, MOH)
Offer healthy foods and set standards in public institutions and other specific settings

Inisiatif Pemerkasaan PIBG untuk menangani masalah obesiti dalam kalangan murid sekolah: Cara Hidup Anda Terbaik (C-HAT)

8,426 schools/16,844 PIBG members trained

(Source: Nutrition Division, MOH)
Offer healthy foods and set standards in public institutions and other specific settings

(Source: Nutrition Division, MOH)
Use economic tools to address food affordability and purchase incentives

Examples—targeted subsidies, price promotions at point of sale, unit pricing, Health-Related Food Taxes

**Subsidy** allocation is expected to remain large at RM40.6 billion in 2014 (2013: RM43.3 billion). The bulk of subsidy payments are channelled for fuel and cash assistance; social welfare programmes; **basic food essential items such as cooking oil, rice and flour**; toll compensation; interest rate differential; educational assistance as well as incentives for farmers and fishermen to increase food production and fish landing.

to ensure fair prices of food products through direct distribution to consumers, several initiatives have been implemented, including an additional **60 Pasar Tani**, **39 Fishermen’s Markets**, **100 Gerai Buah-buahan Segar** and **30 Agrobazaar Kedai Rakyat**.

Restrict food advertising and other forms of commercial promotion

Examples—restrict advertising to CHILDREN that promotes unhealthy diets in all forms of media, sales promotions, packaging, SPONSORSHIP.
Improve the nutritional quality of the whole food supply

Examples—reformulation to reduce sugar, salt, fat, reduce energy density of processed foods, portion size limits
Set incentives and rules to create a healthy retail and food service environment

Examples— incentives for shops to locate in underserved areas, planning restrictions on food outlets, in-store promotions

Neighbourhood food environment – fast food stores concentration, built environment, nearest market, nearest grocery store, local fresh produce store (Colon-Ramos et al, 2017).

Where are the foods that they need—affordable? well-priced? of better quality?
Relative healthy food access (RHFA) = healthy outlets / healthy + unhealthy outlets. (within 4 km)

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<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Descriptive statistics of retail food outlets and RHFA by year</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy food outlets</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unhealthy food outlets</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>932</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convenience store</td>
<td>323</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fast-food restaurant</td>
<td>609</td>
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<td>Total healthy and unhealthy food outlets</td>
<td>1002</td>
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<td>RHFA (%)</td>
<td>7</td>
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(Luan et al, 2015)
Harness the food supply chain and actions across sectors to ensure coherence with health

Examples—health-in-all policies, governance structures for multi-sectoral engagement

Nutrition policies in Malaysia

- Comprehensive nutrition plans:
- Other nutrition plans:
  - Policy Options toCombat Obesity in Malaysia (2016)
  - Breastfeeding Policy (1992, revised in 2006)
- Nutrition in other plans:
  - Health Strategic Plan (2016)
  - Sustainable Consumption and Production Blueprint (2016)
  - MOH POA 2016-2020
  - NSP-NCDs 2016-2020

(Source: Pn Zalma Abdul Razak, Nutrition Division, MOH; Presented at: FAO/WHO International Symposium, Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Improved Nutrition; 1-2 December 2016, FAO Headquarters, Rome)
Inform people about food and nutrition through public awareness

Nutrition Month Malaysia

Pusat Maklumat Pemakanan (Kenyalang Nutri-Info)
Inform people about food and nutrition through public awareness

Healthy Eating through Healthy Shopping (Program Pasaraya Sihat)
Healthy Community Kitchen
Inform people about food and nutrition through public awareness.
Nutrition advice and counselling in health-care settings
Give nutrition education and skills
Healthy diets have an appropriate caloric intake and consist of a diversity of plant-based foods, low amounts of animal source foods, unsaturated rather than saturated fats, and small amounts of refined grains, highly processed foods, and added sugars.

*Eat Healthy, Save Our Planet!*

Thank you.

nutrition.moh.gov.my
REFERENCES