

## Barriers to food quantity intake control and healthy eating among overweight and obese working Malay women in public service

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The objective of this study is to look at the barriers faced by a group of working women who are overweight and obese that hinders control of their food quantity intake and healthy eating habit.

**Methods:** 140 respondents were recruited. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. The four forms of barriers to 'food quantity intake control' assessed were 'lack of knowledge', 'lack of motivation', 'difficult when eating out' and 'have to attend meetings often' and the six forms of barriers to 'eat healthily more frequent' assessed were 'lack of knowledge', 'lack of motivation', 'difficult when eating out', 'costly', 'work commitment' and 'family commitment'.

**Results:** For barrier to 'food quantity intake control', 60.0% of respondents agree that it is due to having to 'attend meetings often' and this is associated with level of education ( $P=0.02$ ) while 57.9% agree it is due to 'difficulty when eating out' and this is associated with marital status and having children ( $P=0.01$  and  $P=0.02$ , respectively). For barriers to 'eating healthily more frequent', 79.3% agree it is due to 'lack of knowledge' and this is associated with having children ( $P=0.03$ ), 67.9 % agree it is due to healthy food items being 'costly' and this is associated with level of education and employment position ( $P=0.01$  and  $P=0.02$ , respectively) while 65.7% agree it is due to 'work commitment' and this is associated with education level ( $P=0.04$ ).

**Conclusion:** Barriers to food quantity intake control and healthy eating are associated with socio demographic and socioeconomic characteristics among this group of overweight and obese women.

**Keyword:** Barriers; Control food quantity; Eat healthily; Overweight; Obese