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THE GADGET GENERATION: BODY MASS INDEX AND DURATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SCREEN-VIEWING AMONG PRESCHOOLERS IN KUANTAN, PAHANG (Article) [\(Open Access\)](#)

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Abstract

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Sedentary lifestyle due to physical inactivity and increased screen-viewing (SV) duration is one of the risk factors for childhood obesity. Thus, this study aimed to assess body mass index (BMI), SV and physical activity (PA) durations among children aged four-to-six years (N=284) attending kindergartens in urban and rural areas of Kuantan, Pahang. The SV and PA durations were estimated via a questionnaire completed by their parents. The preschoolers' height and weight were measured using a stadiometer and a digital weighing scale, respectively. The BMI-for-age status was interpreted using the CDC growth charts and cut-off points. A total of 37.8% of respondents were underweight, 16.7% overweight/obese, while the rest had normal BMI. Almost 90% of the children were using electronic gadgets. In addition, 89.8% of them recorded >two hours/day of total SV duration, exceeding the international recommendation of <two hours/day of screen time and the Malaysian Dietary Guideline's recommendation of <two hours/day of sedentary activity. Only 49.8% (on weekdays) and 75.4% (on weekends) of the children met the recommended one hour/day of moderate PA by the WHO. There were no significant differences of BMI, SV and PA durations between urban and rural respondents. The preschoolers in Kuantan were largely found to exceed the recommended SV duration and only half of them met the recommended PA duration on most days. This suggests that intervention is needed to curb these obesity-inducing sedentary behaviours due to long SV duration and physical inactivity among preschoolers across urban and rural areas of the Pahang capital district.

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BMI childhood obesity electronic gadget physical activity Screen-viewing

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