

Factors associated with binge eating behavior among Malaysian adolescents

ABSTRACT

Although there are numerous studies on binge eating behavior in the Western countries, studies on this behavior in Malaysia are still limited. Therefore, this cross-sectional study aimed to determine the risk factors associated with binge eating behavior among adolescents in Malaysia. The study included 356 adolescents (42.7% males and 57.3% females), aged 13 to 16 years. They completed a self-administered questionnaire on demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds, frequency of family meals, family meal environments, family cohesion, perception of body size, self-esteem, depressive symptoms, perfectionistic self-presentation, and binge eating behavior. Furthermore, their weight, height, and waist circumference were measured. It was found that 14.0% of the participants engaged in binge eating behavior (15.2% in females and 12.5% in males). Additionally, it was identified that high levels of depressive symptoms, high levels of body dissatisfaction, poor family cohesion, and low self-esteem were significantly contributed to binge eating behavior after controlling for sex (adjusted $R^2 = 0.165$, $F = 15.056$, $p < 0.001$). The findings may suggest that improving the relationships between family members, along with eliminating adolescents' negative emotions could help in the prevention of binge eating behavior among adolescents. The identified modifiable risk factors should be incorporated into binge eating preventive programs to increase the effectiveness of the programs.

Keyword: Adolescent; Binge eating behavior; Body dissatisfaction; Depression; Obesity

