DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN UNIVERSITY MALAYA MEDICAL CENTER

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Introduction: The prevalence of childhood obesity in Asian countries is still rising. In Malaysia, health survey in 2008 reports 24% of our children was overweight and obese.

OBJECTIVE: To determine the demographic profile and physical characteristics of overweight and obese children presented to University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC).

Methods: A total of 310 new patients were seen in Paediatric Obesity clinic from 2005-2010. Only 205 patients’ records were available for evaluation. All children have had their anthropometrics measurements taken, including waist circumference, presence of acanthosis nigricans documented and BMI calculated. The children’s birth weight was also noted. Obesity is defined as BMI >97th centile and, overweight if BMI > 85th centile respectively for age and sex.

Results: One-hundred and ninety (92.7%) children were obese and 15 (7.3%) were overweight. There were 117 (57.1%) male and 88 (42.9%) female children studied. One-hundred and forty (68.3%) were Malays, 14(6.8%) Chinese and 51(24.9%) Indian children included. The mean for age was 9.5± 3 years, BMI 28± 5.7 kg/m², waist circumference for male children was 90.4 ± 12.4 cm and female children were 85.2± 14.2 cm. The mean systolic blood pressures were 114± 15 mmhg and diastolic blood pressure were 69.5± 11 mmhg. Seventy-six percent (n=150) of these children has acanthosis nigricans. Amongst these children, 46 (24.4%) were either born small or large for gestational age.

Conclusions: This study showed that childhood obesity predisposes risk for serious co-morbidities. Referring them early would be beneficial to detect early complications.