

Comparison of dietary practice, physical activity  
and body image between underweight, normal  
weight, overweight and obese females from  
Food Science and Nutrition Programme in UCSI.

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## ABSTRACT

Body image plays a vital role in the management of body weight, especially among female adolescents. This study examined the differences in body image perception, eating behavior and physical activity between underweight, normal weight, overweight, and obese females from Food Science and Nutrition Programme in UCSI. Body mass index screening was done on 182 students to identify underweight (UW), normal weight (NW), overweight (OW), and obese (OB) subjects. Sixty seven girls identified as being UW (37%), one hundred and three NW (56%), nine OW (5%) and three OB (2%). Subjects completed a self-administered questionnaire on demographics, eating behavior, physical activity, and nine drawing of female figure ranging in morphology. The study sample comprised Malays (2.2%), Chinese (96.7%) Indians (0.5%), and others (0.5%) with a mean age of 20.78 years. Significantly more OW and OB subjects ( $p = 0.00$ ) than UW and NW subjects had incorrect perception of their current body weight status. Eating behavior patterns were not significantly different between UW, NW, OW, and OB subjects except skipping daily meals ( $p=0.027$ ). There were more OW and OB subjects skipped daily meals sometimes compared to their UW and NW counterparts. Most of the obese subjects often involved in sports and very active in games. Healthy eating and physical activity promotion programmes in college should include sound weight management practices.

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