

**BODY MASS INDEX, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND
DIETARY PRACTICES OF REGISTERED
NURSES IN A PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN KLANG
VALLEY, MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

Background: Obesity is the leading cause of most fatal diseases. Malaysia is one of the countries in Asia with the highest adult obesity rate. Statistics show that 60% of the adult age 18 and above were overweight. As most of the working nurses are within this category, there is a likelihood of them being overweight or obese. Thus, it is important to ensure nurses have an acceptable BMI rate as they have to be role models of healthy behaviours.

Objectives: The objective of this study is to determine the BMI, physical activity and dietary practice among registered nurses working in a private hospital.

Sample: A convenience sampling was used to select the nurses in a private hospital. The study sample comprised of 68 Registered Nurses from a 238 bedded private hospital with a total of 230 nurses, in the Klang Valley. They represent 30% of the total number of Registered Nurses working in the Hospital.

Methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study using a survey methodology to determine BMI, physical activity and dietary pattern of registered nurse in the private hospital, in Klang Valley. A self-administered questionnaire using a Likert-scale was used to obtain the data.

Findings: Only 90% (68) of the completed questionnaires were received. The overall BMI of the nurses were within acceptable standards. Only 17.6% of the nurses were found to be overweight and 5.9% obese. Interestingly, 17.6% of the nurses were found to be underweight. Malay nurses were found to have highest overweight (40%) and obesity (15%) rate among all the nurses. Majority nurses who were overweight and obese were in the age group of "20-29" (14.3% and 2.0%) and "30-39" years (27.3% and 18.2%). The findings show that the nurses were physically inactive at home and their only activity is when they are working. Majority of the nurses were found to skip their meals while working.

Conclusion: The study shows that nurses were physically inactive and they need to do regular exercise and improve their dietary habits if they want to continue maintaining their BMI within the acceptable standards.

Implication for nursing: This study demonstrates the need to monitor the BMI rate of nurses through regular screening and ensuring that they are educated to follow healthy behaviours such as doing routine physical exercises and having proper dietary habits.