Obesity among children - an urgent call for action

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Cordially invite you to attend

Recent Advances in Maternal and Child Nutrition

19th October 2011 • The Main Lecture Hall
Scope of presentation ....
1. Obesity a major global public health problem

2. Data on nutritional status of children in Malaysia shows trend of increasing obesity
   - Data in 1990s
   - NHMS III 2006
   - other research data

3. Intervention strategies and plans especially focused on children
   - National Strategic Plan for NCDs

4. Nutrition promotion programmes of NSM
   - Variety of child education programmes
1. Introduction ....

Obesity – a major global public health problem
Childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century
- affecting many low- and middle-income countries, particularly in urban settings

Global prevalence increased at alarming rate
- in 2010 the number of overweight children < five years estimated to be over 42 million
- close to 35 million or 83% of these are living in developing countries

Dramatic socio-economic development in the country brought about significant change in nutrition scene over the past 4 decades
2. Nutritional status of children in Malaysia

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.... increasing trend of obesity
- Study of Children <18 years in poor rural families in Peninsular Malaysia (Khor & Tee, 1997)
  - overweight = 2% Nationwide
  - National Health & Morbidity Survey III (2006) (n=21,249)
- NHMS III (2006), children < 18 years of age
  - Overall prevalence 5.4%
  - boys (6.0%) higher than girls (4.7%)
  - urban (6.3%) higher than rural (4.0%)
  - Prevalence rates vary considerably among different states
    - highest in more urban states such as Kuala Lumpur (9.1%). Malacca
Prevalence of overweight highest in 7-9 years:

- 7 to 9 years: 6.8%
- 10 to 13 years: 5.9%
- 14 to 15 years: 4.8%
- 16 to <18 years: 4.3%
- All ages: 5.4%

The highest prevalence of overweight is observed in children aged 7 to 9 years.
2. Nutritional status of children in Malaysia

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.... other research data showed higher prevalence than NHMS III
Toddlers and pre-schoolers:

- **NSM Bright Start Nutrition study (5-6 years, n=992) in 72 privately-owned kindergartens in Klang Valley (Poh et al, 2001)**
  - overweight and obesity almost 19%

- **NSM study in 2010 in urban areas (Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Selangor) among children aged 1 – 3 years and aged 4 – 6 yrs**
  - overweight among 1-3 years = 14.5%
  - overweight among 4-6 years = 16.6%

- **NSM NutriStudy project in 2010 of children aged 4 – 6 years in Peninsular Malaysia (n=1933) (Nasir et al. 2011)**
Primary school children:

- A study of primary school children (7–10 years old; n=5995) in almost all schools in Kuala Lumpur (Tee et al, 2002)
  - prevalence of overweight = 8.4%
  - prevalence among boys 1.4 times that among the girls

- A UKM study of over 9375 primary school children (7-12 years) (Norimah et al 2007)
  - overweight and obese = more than 25%

- NSM Healthy Kids Programme of primary school children, 2010 (10 years, n= 386)
Not an exhaustive review of the extent of the overweight and obesity problem among children in the country.

Findings strictly not comparable because different growth reference used in determining overweight and obesity.

Nevertheless, no doubt that overweight and obesity have become significant problems among children in the country.

The proportions of primary school children affected are alarming. The consequences of this is extremely serious.
Overweight and obese children are likely to stay obese into adulthood and more likely to develop NCDs like diabetes and CVD at a younger age.

Once children (and adults too) are obese, it is often difficult for them to lose weight through physical activity and healthy diet.

WHO and all relevant international agencies have therefore called for prevention of obesity and the strategy must be the prevention of weight gain from childhood.

We do not have an option: prevention of obesity in childhood is the only way.
3. Intervention strategies and plans, especially focused on children.
Master plan for nutrition intervention programmes in Malaysia, tackling both under- and overnutrition problems

One of the 6 indicators and targets identified in the NPAN to reduce prevalence of overweight and obesity among school children 6-12 years to not more than 10% by 2015.

After the mid-term review of NPAN in July 2011, the target in relation overweight and obesity in school children was revised to the following:

- The target was to reduce the prevalence of overweight/obesity by 0.5% each year.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age group of children</th>
<th>Prevalence in NHMS III, 2006</th>
<th>Target for year 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prevalence of overweight (BMI for age &gt;+1SD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>12 years</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
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<td>15 years</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
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But prevalence of primary school children now almost 30%!
NPAN II Framework
One key enabling strategies in NPANM II

- Promoting healthy eating and active living
Activities specifically directed towards tackling overweight and obesity

- Establish a programme focusing on the prevention and control of obesity
- Set up intersectoral technical committee on obesity
- Strengthen the obesity component in the “wellness clinic” at Health Centres
- Develop a childhood obesity prevention programme
- Increase awareness campaign on obesity among all sectors of the community
- Establish a weight management programme for the overweight and
3. Intervention strategies and plans, especially focused on children.

b. National Strategic Plan for Non-Communicable Diseases (2010-2014)
The National Strategic Plan for Non-Communicable Diseases (NSP-NCD) (2010-2014) has clearly identified obesity as among the NCDs that need urgent action by all stakeholders.
OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the NSP-NCD is to prevent or delay the onset of CVD and diabetes and their related complications, and to improve their management, thus enhancing quality of life of our population, leading to longer and more productive lifes.

The specific objectives are:
1. To raise the priority accorded to NCDs in development work at global and national levels, and to integrate prevention and control of such diseases into policies across all government departments;
2. To establish and strengthen national policies and plans for the prevention and control of NCDs;
3. To promote interventions to reduce the main shared modifiable risk factors for NCDs: tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol;
4. To promote research for the prevention and control of NCDs;
5. To promote partnerships for the prevention and control of NCDs;
6. To monitor NCDs and their determinants, and evaluate progress at the national, regional and global levels.
SEVEN STRATEGIES OF NSP-NCD

The NSP-NCD contains seven strategies:

1. Prevention and Promotion
2. Clinical Management
3. Increasing Patient Compliance
4. Action with NGOs, Professional Bodies & Other Stakeholders
5. Monitoring, Research and Surveillance
6. Capacity Building
7. Policy and Regulatory Interventions
5.1 STRATEGY ONE: PREVENTION AND PROMOTION

Key activities

3. Strengthening of the School Health programmes to include a component involving the family and community, in both health education and health-promoting activities, with emphasis on:
   i. Increase and re-orient physical education in the curricula
   ii. Promote extracurricular physical activity
   iii. Improve access to healthy food at schools
   iv. Increase barrier to unhealthy food at schools
   v. School-based NCD risk factor screening & intervention

This includes strict enforcement of existing healthy food policies and provisions at schools and school canteens. The Ministry of Health needs to revise existing and develop new guidelines, manuals and training modules for all of the activities.
Besides the Ministry of Health Malaysia, various other agencies and professional bodies have collaborated in promoting health eating activities.

- The Nutrition Society of Malaysia has carried out a number of nutrition promotion activities to reach out to the community.
2. Intervention programmes, especially focused on children ....

c. Nutrition Society of Malaysia
Since its establishment in 1985, NSM regularly mounts community nutrition education programmes for the public ….
In line with two key strategies in National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN) Malaysia

- Promoting healthy eating and active living
- Ensuring all have access to nutrition information

NSM has contributed significantly towards guiding the public to discover the benefits of good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle

Include a variety of specific out-reach intervention programmes targeted at various age groups and employing various communication approaches

A number of educational leaflets and booklets as well as press articles have
Over the years, NSM has given a great deal of focus on promoting healthy nutrition among children. We believe that interventions have to start young.

Although not specifically termed as prevention of obesity programmes,
these approaches are all aimed at promoting healthy eating and active living, to reduce risk to nutrition-related disorders.

- include nutritional excesses, resulting in overweight and obesity

Many of these programmes are in partnership with the food industry.
Child Nutrition Education Programme

- Clear programme identity, collaboration with Dutch Lady Milk industries
- Focused target group: toddlers, parents, kindergarten teachers/operators
- Main channel of delivery: kindergartens