

# Health Seeking Behaviour among Adults in Malaysia During Times of Illness

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## INTRODUCTION

Health-seeking behaviour influences healthcare services utilisation(1) and self-care. Delay in timely and appropriate care when one is ill may lead to rise in morbidity and mortality(2,3). This study aimed to describe the health-seeking behaviour among adults in Malaysia with acute illness and oral health problems.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

We analysed data of adults aged 18 years and over from the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2019. This cross-sectional survey used a complex study design with a two-stage stratified cluster sampling. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using a validated questionnaire. Descriptive analysis was performed using STATA Version 14.0 software.

## RESULTS

In the last 2 weeks prior to interview,



**20.8%** reported experiencing acute illness

Among them,

**24.9%** Self-medicated

**44.7%** Did not seek care from healthcare practitioner



**8.4%** reported experiencing oral health problems

Among them,

**13.7%** Self-medicated

**34.6%** Did not seek care from healthcare practitioner



**23.1%**

Did not seek care,

**BUT**

About a **QUARTER** perceived needed care

**29.0%**



### ACUTE ILLNESS

### Main reasons for not seeking care

### ORAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

**9.3%** Work commitment/ could not take time off/ other commitments

**22.6%**

**30.1%** Perceived not sick enough and self-medicated

**17.9%**

**37.8%** Perceived not sick enough and do not need treatment

**29.2%**

## DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

Our findings revealed that more than one-third of the adults did not seek care when ill despite a quarter of them perceiving care was needed. Promoting responsible self-medication is important(4) to empower people in self-care. Nevertheless, seeking appropriate care when needed is equally important.

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## TAKE HOME MESSAGE

**SEEK CARE**

when you

**NEED CARE**

