

# P02 Socio-demographic distribution of vegetarians in Malaysia

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## Introduction

Vegetarian diet has been practiced in many countries in the world. There are growing evidence that vegetarian diet helps to maintain better health status compared to non-vegetarian diet<sup>1</sup>. In Malaysia, there are adults practice vegetarian diet due to different reasons<sup>2</sup>. This study aims to determine the overall prevalence of adults practicing vegetarian diet and to investigate the sociodemographic distribution of vegetarians among adults in Malaysia.

## Methods

1. Secondary data from the population representative cross-sectional survey, National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2019 was analysed.
2. A two-stage stratified cluster sampling design was used in NHMS 2019.
3. Information on socio-demographic background was obtained from a face-to-face interview conducted by trained research team members.
4. Vegetarian was defined as respondent who reported practising vegetarian since one month ago during the home visit.
5. Data from 10,419 respondents who were aged 18 years and above, were selected to conduct descriptive analysis and Rao-Scott chi-square test using SPSS software

## Discussion

1. Overall, the prevalence of adults practising vegetarian diet was 4.9%. This prevalence is comparable with the findings in the United State (5.0%)<sup>3</sup>.
2. There was no significant difference between location, marital status, education level, and household income among vegetarians.
3. The gender difference of practicing vegetarian diet in this study maybe be as results of different level of adherence to meat intake among males and females<sup>4</sup>.
4. The findings of this study will help to alert the government agencies that the population prevalence of adults practicing vegetarian diet with the basic socio-demographic characteristics distribution in the country.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, only one in twenty adults in Malaysia were vegetarians. Sex and ethnicity are the factors for vegetarian practice in Malaysia. Future study is suggested to investigate the health status and dietary quality of vegetarians in Malaysia.

## References

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## Results



**4.9 %**  
OF ADULTS PRACTICING  
vegetarian diet

Prevalence of adults practicing vegetarian diet was significantly higher among female adults



**4.0%**  
were men



**5.9 %**  
were women\*

There were significantly higher prevalence of Indian adults practised vegetarian diet compared to adults with other ethnicities



**Ethnicity**

**13.2%**  
Of Indian\* practised  
vegetarian diet

Adults from rural areas (5.1%), with older age ( $\geq 40$  years) (5.2%), and earned income at quintile 3 and above (4.9-5.8%) have higher prevalence of vegetarian practice.



**5.1%**  
lived in rural



**5.2%**  
 $\geq 40$  years old



**4.9-5.8%**  
 $\geq$  Quintile 3-5

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