

EXPLORING HOW SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY FOOD ENVIRONMENT SHAPE THE FOOD CHOICES OF THE ADOLESCENTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION



• Adolescence obesity is the result of multifaceted and complex interactions between **dietary habit, genetics, behavior and environment** (Murukami et al, 2011)

OBJECTIVE

To explore **perceived factors** related to **food choices and quality of diet in school and community food environment** among **adolescent**

- The food environment plays an important role in **promoting or hindering positive dietary behaviour** (Swinburn et al, 2003)
- Environmental influences can **promote excess unhealthy dietary intakes**, which triggers upward trend in obesity (Laska, 2010)

METHODOLOGY

Socio
Ecological
Model

- Purposive
- Multi-ethnic
- 13yo to 16yo
- 4 regions

34
adolescents

Semi-structured &
In-depth Interviews

Tool: Atlas.TI

Thematic Coding

THEMES

- > Accessibility
- > Availability
- > Time Constraint
- > Marketing & Services

RESULTS

There are **multifaceted factors** present in food environments that potentially contribute to unfavourable patterns of dietary intake thus leading to higher body mass index (BMI).

Time constraint

"Because of the time constraint."
R15

Availability

"...when we are too hungry and there's no food at home, so we will look for food at the fast food restaurants." R38

Marketing & Services

"The reason is faster and tastier..." R49

Accessibility

"Maybe just about 5 minutes from my house to Tesco and they got McD and KFC." R39

"I usually prefer Chinese food because it is the nearest to my residential area." R25

"It's not that far...quite close ...there's also in this neighborhood." R35

"I will avoid all the fried stuff but I prefer pizza since it provides delivery so very convenient." R39



DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

The shifting in eating culture in Malaysia has implications in terms of diet quality and obesity problem.

Adolescents perceived very **limited access to healthy options at home, school and community environment** inline with study by Watts et al (2015).

Findings were consistent with Meizi et al (2012) which revealed that the **density of fast food outlets and accessibility to unhealthy food sources** were perceived as one of the contributor for negative dietary habits.

Tighter regulations should be set with regards to **promotional and marketing prompts** by fast food services and the **quality of food** by school canteens.

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