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FACULTY OF
— MEDICINE UiTM —

No. 4 / 2025

eISSN 2805-4628



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Adolescent obesity continues to rise in Malaysia, reflecting global trends and signalling a growing public health challenge. With nearly one in three Malaysian teenagers now classified as overweight or obese, early intervention has become more crucial than ever ¹. Recognising this urgent need, a team of Year 2 medical students from the Faculty of Medicine, UiTM conducted an impactful awareness programme titled Teen Fit Future: Tackling Obesity Head-On at Asia Pacific Smart School Secondary, Subang Jaya.

Why focus on adolescent obesity?

The teenage years are a pivotal period when lifestyle habits become ingrained. Sedentary routines, increasing screen time, convenience-based food choices, and academic pressure contribute to poor dietary practices. Excess weight acquired



CONSULTATION session with Mrs. Nor Fatimah on the content of the presentation and activities.

TEEN FIT FUTURE: ENGAGING ADOLESCENTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST OBESITY

during adolescence increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, sleep disorders, and long-term cardiovascular disease ². Many teenagers also struggle with low self-esteem, bullying, and psychological stress linked to body image.

Despite these risks, studies show that adolescents often possess fragmented knowledge about nutrition and rely heavily on convenience

or peer influence ³. The project's central goal was to strengthen understanding, reshape attitudes, and encourage sustainable daily habits rather than simply transferring information.

The student team consulted Mrs Nor Fatimah Ishak, a dietitian from Hospital Al-Sultan Abdullah, to ensure scientific accuracy and age-appropriate content. The programme combined lectures, interactive

booths, mini fitness challenges, quizzes, and peer discussions in a hands-on format to maintain engagement and promote active participation. The session covered key topics including the causes and types of obesity, balanced nutrition and healthy food choices, the importance of physical activity and mental well-being, correct use of Body Mass Index (BMI), and the long-term complications of untreated obesity.

Analysis of pre- and post-programme quiz scores showed knowledge improvement, although the differences were significant. This suggests that students already



INTERACTIVE activity conducted by year 2 medical students

had strong foundational understanding, likely due to curriculum exposure and nationwide nutrition

campaigns under the National Plan of Action for Nutrition of Malaysia III (2016–2025) (4).



A picture with 49 Form 4 students from Asia Pacific Smart School Secondary, Subang Jaya.



The project reaffirmed a key insight: information alone does not guarantee behavioural change. While awareness forms the foundation, adolescent health initiatives must also integrate supportive environments, role modelling, parental involvement, and school policies that encourage movement and healthy eating.

Participant feedback was highly positive, with the highest rating for “The activities were fun and engaging” (3.86/4), reflecting the impact of interactive learning.



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Future improvements may include cooking demonstrations, structured workout sessions, digital health tools, and collaborations with youth influencers. Sustained, multi-level efforts are crucial for driving meaningful lifestyle changes. Teen Fit Future highlighted UiTM medical students' strong commitment to adolescent health through community engagement, an encouraging step toward a healthier future generation.

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