

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**GENDER DIFFERENCES IN HEALTH HABITS
AND MOTIVATION FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
AMONG UiTM PUNCAK ALAM STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

Background: Gender differences in health habits and motivation for a healthy lifestyle among UiTM Puncak Alam students are crucial areas of research, with significant implications for public health and well-being. Understanding these differences is essential for developing tailored health promotion initiatives, especially in the context of university students transitioning to adulthood and forming long-term health habits. Aim: This study aims to explore the health behaviours and motivation of male and female student at UiTM Puncak Alam. Method: A cross sectional study was conducted with where sample about 313 students where 73 of them is a male and others which is 240 is a female was surveyed using a online questionnaire in google form. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: Sociodemographic information, health complaints, motivation for a healthy lifestyle, and questions regarding health habits. Data were analyzed using chi-square and t-test to identify significant difference between genders. Result: The study findings indicate significant differences between male and female students across various health-related variables. Male students showed higher levels of tobacco use ($r = 0.503^{**}$, $p < 0.01$) and alcohol consumption ($r = 0.411^{**}$, $p < 0.01$) compared to females. Stress levels were notably correlated with poorer self-rated health among males ($r = 0.376^{**}$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the need for stress management interventions. In contrast, female students exhibited stronger correlations between motivation for a healthy lifestyle and self-rated health ($r = 0.834$) and healthier food habits ($r = 0.346^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Conclusion: The study indicates that significant differences in both gender of students in UiTM Puncak Alam in health habits and motivation for healthy lifestyle. Intervention promoting more healthier habits and motivation should reconsider to improve student lifestyle in more healthier ways.

Keywords: Gender differences, health habits, motivation, healthy lifestyle, university students.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Gender differences in health behaviours and incentives to adopt healthy lifestyles are developing areas of research with major consequences for public health and well-being. Extensive research has shown that gender has a significant effect on influencing health-related behaviours, covering both the nature of these behaviours and the motivating factors behind them.

A large number of studies conducted across various groups consistently show gender differences in health behaviours. For example, Anderson and Carter (2019) found that women are more likely than men to prioritize a healthy diet, participate in regular physical activity, and actively perform preventive health interventions. Men, on the other hand, may have a higher incidence of habits such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, which are associated with various health hazards. (Parker et al., 2022)

The motivation behind pursuing a healthy lifestyle varies by gender. Often, cultural standards, body image issues and personal ambitions impact this cause. In particular, cultural norms related to attractiveness and well-being often inspire women, driving behaviours such as weight control and adherence to a nutritious diet (Smith & Davis, 2020). Men, on the other hand, may be more drawn towards performance-oriented objectives, such as increasing athletic skills or physical strength (Harris & Lewis, 2019).

Identification and understanding of gender differences in health behaviours and motives is important for the creation of specific health promotion initiatives. As an academic institution, UiTM Puncak Alam provides a unique framework to explore how this gender inequality plays out in this particular demographic. The health behaviour and motivation of UiTM Puncak Alam students require investigation, as this understanding