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Effectiveness of a Multidisciplinary School-Based Obesity Intervention Programme Among Early Adolescents in Perak Tengah, Malaysia

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Introduction:

Obesity in early adolescence is a complex, chronic condition influenced by behavioural, environmental, and psychosocial factors. Early, holistic interventions within the school setting may play a key role in improving weight trajectory and preventing long-term obesity-related complications. This study evaluates the outcomes and feasibility of a multidisciplinary school-based obesity intervention programme among early adolescents.

Methods:

A school-based multidisciplinary obesity intervention programme was conducted in 2025 among secondary school students aged 13–14 years in Perak Tengah, Malaysia. Sixty students with obesity were recruited; one student dropped out, resulting in 59 students included in the final analysis. The programme comprised seven sessions delivered over five months, incorporating health assessment, nutrition education, structured physical activity, psychological support, and family medicine input, adapted from the *Modul Projek Intervensi Obesiti di Sekolah (UNICEF)*. Attendance, body weight, and body mass index (BMI) category were assessed at baseline and at the end of the intervention.

Results:

Programme engagement was satisfactory, with approximately 78% of participants attending more than 50% of sessions (>4 out of 7 sessions). At programme completion, 33 students (~56%) demonstrated weight reduction, 24 students experienced weight gain, and one student remained weight-stable. Among students who achieved weight reduction, 7 students attained clinically meaningful weight loss of 5–10%, while the remainder experienced weight reduction of <5%. A shift in BMI category was observed, with a proportion of students transitioning from the obesity category towards overweight by the final assessment.

Conclusion:

This multidisciplinary, school-based obesity intervention demonstrated moderate effectiveness and good feasibility among early adolescents aged 13–14 years. While substantial weight loss was achieved in a subset of participants, improvements in BMI trajectory and programme engagement support the value of early, holistic interventions within the school environment as part of district-level adolescent obesity management.