

JCHS

Journal of Clinical and Health Sciences

#2
2026

SUPPLEMENTARY ISSUE

Malaysian Obesity Society
MYOS



ND **2 NATIONAL OBESITY SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE**

ABSTRACT BOOK

11th - 12th April 2026
**Connexion Conference &
Event Centre,**
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Theme
**Obesity as a Treatable
Chronic Disease:
Science, Strategy,
and Success**

Issue **September 2026** | Volume **11** Issue **02 (Supplementary)**
eISSN 0127-984x
jchs-medicine.uitm.edu.my



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PD-2

Tackling Obesity at the Frontlines: Real-World Outcomes of a Multidisciplinary Intervention in Malaysian Primary Care

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Introduction:

Obesity has reached critical levels in Malaysia. The National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023 reports that 54.4% of adults live with overweight or obesity, with obesity prevalence alone reaching 23.8%. Despite this, data on effective weight management within Malaysian primary care remains scarce. While multidisciplinary care is recommended, its practical application requires evaluation. We assessed a coordinated intervention involving a Family Medicine Specialist, dietitian, and physiotherapist to determine its impact on the anthropometric profiles of adults living with in a primary care setting.

Methods:

We conducted a retrospective observational study between February 2024 and October 2025. Thirty patients were enrolled in a structured 6-month follow-up program. The multidisciplinary team (MDT) comprised a Family Medicine Specialist for clinical oversight, a dietitian for medical nutrition therapy, and a physiotherapist for prescribed physical activity. Anthropometric measurements, including body weight, BMI, and body composition, were recorded at baseline and the 6-month mark. Data were analyzed using paired t-tests to evaluate post-intervention changes, with significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Results:

The study population ($N=30$) was predominantly female (83.3%), with a mean age of 41.8 ± 11 years and a mean baseline BMI of $37.1 \pm 7 \text{ kg/m}^2$. For the participants completing the 6-month follow-up ($n=17$), we observed a statistically significant mean weight loss of 1.3 kg ($p=0.011$) and a BMI reduction of 0.4 kg/m^2 ($p=0.036$). Although some individuals demonstrated improved visceral fat levels and muscle preservation, these body composition changes did not reach statistical significance ($p > 0.05$) across the cohort over the study period.

Conclusion:

Integrating a Family Medicine Specialist, dietitian, and physiotherapist into primary care facilitates significant improvements in weight and BMI over six months. These results suggest that frontline MDTs are essential for obesity management, though more intensive protocols may be required for significant body composition shifts.