

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



**UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
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PD-61

The Clinical Characteristics and Profiles of Young Obese Children: A Worrying Discovery

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Introduction:

Childhood obesity is an escalating epidemic worldwide. Being obese at young age can be detrimental to health and quality of life, both at present and in the future. Multisystem complications due to obesity are seen in these young children.

Methods:

Obese children who attended Paediatric Obesity Clinic in Universiti Malaya Medical Centre aged 10 years or below were included in this study from the year 2016 to 2026. Retrospective data of physical parameters, relevant clinical history and presence of complications at first and follow-up visits were retrieved from the unit's database and electronic medical records.

Results:

Forty children with obesity were included. The mean age at referral was 7 years old. Eight out of forty (20%) were 5 years or below, the youngest was 2.3 years old with BMI of 26.3kg/m². Almost 75% (29) were male. Average BMI was 27.69kg/m², majority had Obesity Class III, 70% (28). Eleven children defaulted follow up, whilst eight patients (20%) had reduction of BMI. One in five was born to GDM mother. Almost three quarters (70%) were children to obese parent/s. Near half (40%, 16) had OSAS and 9 were on NCPAP. Other metabolic complications were dyslipidaemia (16, 40%), dysglycaemia (14, 35%) and elevated transaminitis (11, 28%).

Conclusion:

Obesity in young children is indeed an alarming situation. Despite their young age, obesity related complications are seen in this group of children. Since this is a single center study, a larger cohort is needed to study the amplitude of this adversity.