

OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY AMONG MALAYSIAN ADULTS: PREVALENCE, TREND, AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS

Chong Chean Tat¹, Lai Wai Kent¹, Syafinaz Mohd Sallehuddin¹, Shubash Shander Ganapathy¹
¹Institute for Public Health, National Institutes of Health, Ministry of Health Malaysia



INTRODUCTION

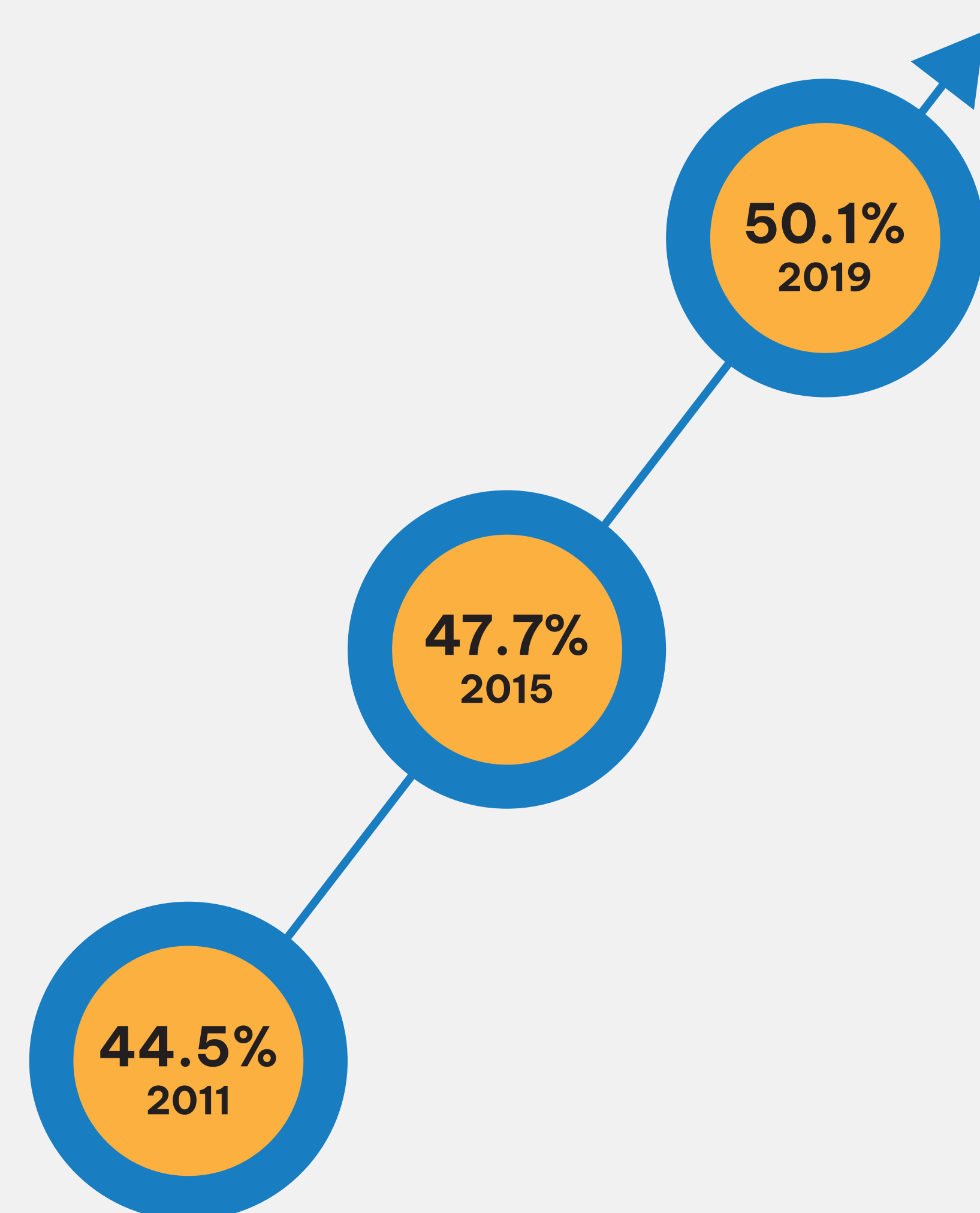
According to the World Health Organization's predictions, the majority of countries, including those with middle- and low-income levels, will be impacted by the worldwide rise in overweight and obesity. Therefore, this study aims to determine the prevalence trend and factors associated with overweight and obesity among Malaysian adults.

METHODOLOGY

The prevalence trend of overweight and obesity was analysed based on adult respondents from national survey data, the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) Malaysia, from the years 2011, 2015, and 2019, respectively. Logistic regression was conducted among 9,782 Malaysian adults from NHMS 2019 to identify the associated factors (sociodemographic data, lifestyle behaviours, and non-communicable diseases) with overweight and obesity.

RESULTS

i. Prevalence and trend of overweight and obesity among Malaysian Adults



ii. Factors associated with overweight and obesity among Malaysian adults

Variable	Adjusted OR [95% CI]	P value
Sex		
- Male	Ref	
- Female	1.33 (1.11,1.58)	0.002*
Age		
- 18 – 29	Ref	
- 30 – 59	1.61 (1.31,1.97)	<0.001**
- ≥ 60	0.75 (0.54,1.04)	0.088
Ethnicity		
- Malays	1.68 (1.36,2.07)	<0.001**
- Indians	2.59 (1.80,3.74)	<0.001**
- Other Bumiputras	1.82 (1.38,2.39)	<0.001**
- Others	1.15 (0.81,1.62)	0.434
- Chinese	Ref	
Marital Status		
- Single	Ref	
- Married	1.23 (1.00,1.50)	0.046*
- Others	0.92 (0.67,1.25)	0.581
Health Literacy		
- Limited	Ref	
- Adequate	1.19 (1.01,1.39)	0.033*
Diabetes		
- No	Ref	
- Yes	1.47 (1.23,1.75)	<0.001**
Hypertension		
- No	Ref	
- Yes	2.60 (2.20,3.07)	<0.001**

(*significant at P < 0.05, **significant at P < 0.001)
Result indicated that hypercholesterolemia, smoking status, physical activity level, fruit and vegetable intake were not the associated factors with overweight and obesity among Malaysian adults.

DISCUSSION

- The global prevalence of obesity has nearly tripled since 1975, affecting many countries, including those with low and moderate incomes¹.
- This resulted in a significant global health burden², contributing to higher rates of disability-adjusted life years and mortality².
- The increased financial independence, easy access to food, and availability of calorie-dense food in lower- and middle-income countries may contribute to the higher prevalence of overweight among adults⁴.
- The increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity has been linked to the development of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including stroke, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes⁵.
- Weight control measures have been established as indispensable and effective strategies in the prevention and progression of non-communicable diseases, underscoring their significance in mitigating the global health impact of these conditions⁶.

CONCLUSION

The rise in the prevalence of overweight and obesity indicated an alarming problem and urgent attention is needed in Malaysia. Public health nutrition intervention strategies should engage these high-risk populations in an equitable and cost-effective manner to alleviate the increasing pressure of overweight and obesity in Malaysia.



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Author Contact
chean@moh.gov.my