Self-perceived weight: An indicator for Quality of Life among Low-Income Families in Malaysia

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I am still fit!

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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is rated as the most obese country in the South-East Asian region. In healthcare, quality of life (QOL) is used as an important measure of health outcomes. The association between QOL and perceived weight status, especially among the low-income group is not well established. This study attempts to investigate the association between perceived excess weight and QOL among adults in low-income category in Malaysia. This is especially important as the perception of weight plays a vital role in determining a person's willingness to adopt healthy habits while conversely, inaccurate perceptions can worsen weight issues. In Malaysia, the government provides affordable homes for the urban poor under the Program Perumahan Rakyat (PPR).

OBJECTIVES

1 To obtain the **prevalence** of obesity in the PPR Sri Pantai residents

2 To determine the **perceptions** of the residents regarding their body weight

3 To investigate whether there is an association between **quality of life** and **the difference between one's perceived ideal weight and actual weight**

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was conducted at the community housing program low cost flats at PPR Sri Pantai, by using the residents of the housing area as the sample size. 179 individuals participated in the study.
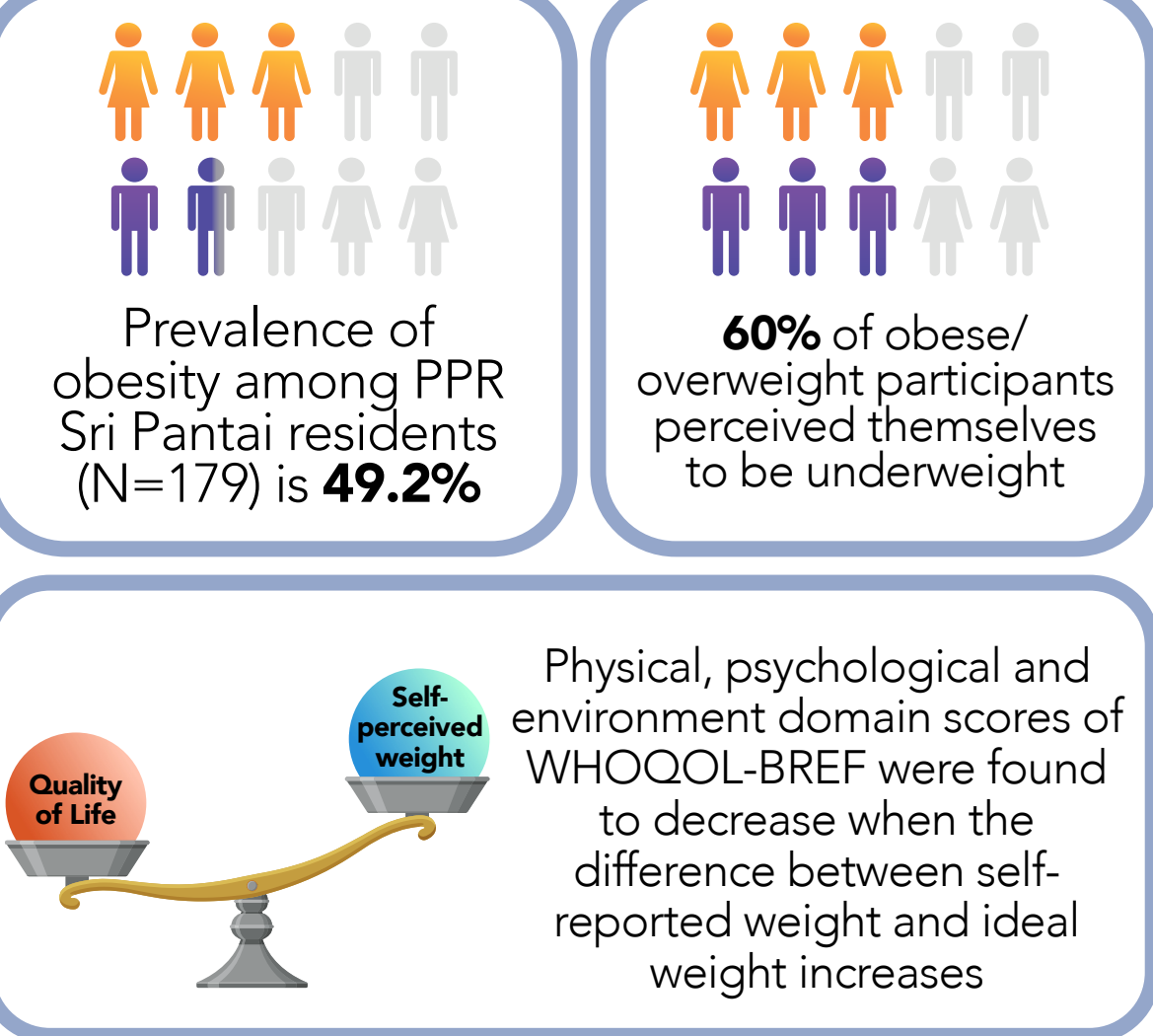
An **online questionnaire** was used for the survey. The 11 section questionnaire was drafted on Google Forms.

The data was collected, organized and then uploaded onto the **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS version 27, New York, USA)** in order to compare the necessary variables.

- **Chi-squared test** was used to analyze the association between self perceived weight and BMI
- **Pearson's correlation** was used to find the association between the QOL and difference in self reported weight and ideal weight.
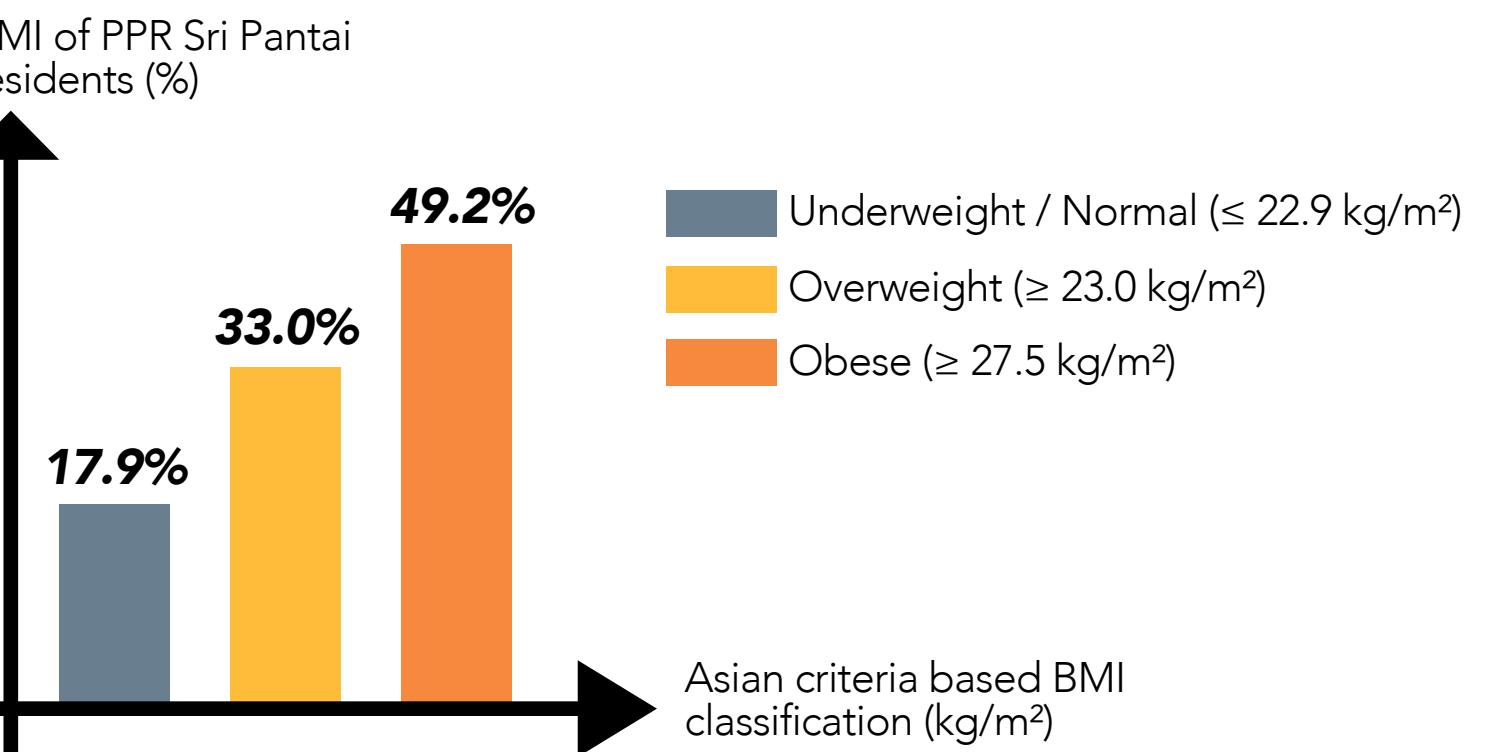
A **p-value of less than 0.05** was standardized to be considered statistically significant.

<0.05

RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

Prevalence of obesity among PPR Sri Pantai residents (N=179) is **49.2%**

60% of obese/overweight participants perceived themselves to be underweight

Physical, psychological and environment domain scores of WHOQOL-BREF were found to decrease when the difference between self-reported weight and ideal weight increases

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics of BMI values categorized according to Asian criteria-based BMI classification (N=179)

BMI of PPR Sri Pantai residents (%)

- Underweight / Normal (≤ 22.9 kg/m²)
- Overweight (≥ 23.0 kg/m²)
- Obese (≥ 27.5 kg/m²)

17.9% | 33.0% | 49.2%

Asian criteria based BMI classification (kg/m²)

Perceived weight vs actual body weight (N=165)

	Based on BMI				
Perceived weight	**Underweight**	**Normal**	**Overweight**	**Obese**	**Total**
Overweight	0 (0%)	2 (2.5%)	22 (27.2%)	57 (70.4%)	81
Underweight	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.7%)	3 (20.0%)	6 (40.0%)	15
Normal	0 (0%)	22 (31.9%)	27 (39.1%)	20 (29.0%)	69

Association between difference in ideal weight and self-reported weight and QOL dimensions (N=179)

	WHOQOL-BREF Domains					
Variable	**Physical**	**r**	**p**	**Psychological**	**r**	**p**
Difference in ideal weight and self-reported weight	66.36±14.27	-0.914	0.009	66.96±15.55	-0.159	0.034

	WHOQOL-BREF Domains					
Variable	**Social**	**r**	**p**	**Environment**	**r**	**p**
Difference in ideal weight and self-reported weight	64.52±20.38	-0.057	0.450	59.28±17.32	-0.175	0.005

CONCLUSION

Physical, psychological and environment domain scores of WHOQOL-BREF were found to decrease when the difference in the ideal weight and self-reported actual weight increased. Around 60% of overweight/obese people have underestimated their weight, thus there is a need to prioritize intervention to educate and increase the awareness of these individuals regarding the actual weight categories so that they will be able to label themselves correctly into underweight, normal, overweight and obese. Moreover, health promotions must be designed to educate the individuals on appropriate weight management strategies to help them achieve their ideal weight thereby improving their quality of life

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