

Socio-demography, nutritional status and physical activity among elderly in Samarahan division, Sarawak, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The physical activity among elderly has been associated with reduction of risk from all-cause mortality and improve physical, mental, and social well-being. The objectives were to determine the physical activity status among elderly in Samarahan Division, Sarawak and its association with socio-demographic characteristics and nutritional status. A cross-sectional study was carried out on 199 elderly, aged between 60 to 90 years, from rural area in Samarahan Division (Asajaya and Simunjan district), Malaysia. Socio-demographic characteristic was taken via questionnaire, nutritional status and body composition of the elderly was measured using anthropometric measurement, and physical activity using pedometer. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 26. The proportion of physically active among elderly was 12.6% and mean daily steps are 3946 steps (SD=1669 steps). Multiple linear regressions revealed that age, body mass index (BMI), and sex were significant associated with physical activity. Lack of physical activity among elderly remain a problem. Understanding these predictors related to physical activity is important for designing intervention program.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The physical activity among elderly has been associated with reduction of risk from all-cause mortality and improve physical, mental and social well-being [1]. Higher level of physical activity would increase an odd of healthy ageing by 39% [2]. According to Malaysia National Health Morbidity Survey 2015, the prevalence of physical activity among elderly in Malaysia was 51.2% which much lower than compare to global prevalence 77.0% [3]. Another study revealed the prevalence of physical activity among older people in Kelantan State is 77.8% [4]. However, the above studies were based on subjective measurement of physical activity. Very limited studies conducted on physical activity using objective method such as pedometer and accelerometer among elderly in Malaysia. According to Sazlina [5] reported that the average daily steps among older people with diabetes mellitus is 3549 steps per day (SD=489 steps, n=69). Another study by Azizan [6] reported that the average steps among elders (community dwelling people) are 1737 steps per day (SD=225 steps, n=73). Both studies have shown that majority of elderly were not physically active based on the current recommendation of physical activity among elderly which more than 5000 steps per day [7].

The physical activity of elderly was influenced by individual factors in term of socio-demographic characteristics, and nutritional status. Therefore, this study objective was to determine the physical activity