EP062

HEALTH PROMOTION LITERACY AMONG MALAYSIAN ADULTS: 2019 VS 2023

MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Health literacy is a critical determinant of health outcomes, influencing individuals' capacity to access, understand, and apply health information, as well as to engage in health promotion activities[1,2]. Monitoring trends helps identify gaps, and evaluate the impact of public health policies and interventions[3]. Hence, evaluating changes over time is important to assess the effectiveness of these efforts.

OBJECTIVES

This study aims to examine health promotion literacy among Malaysian adults by comparing findings between 2019 and 2023.



METHOD

- This study employed a cross-sectional design by using data derived from nationwide survey conducted across Malaysia in 2019 and 2023 in conjunction with the National Health Morbidity Survey (NHMS) targeting adults aged ≥18 years.
- A two-stage stratified random sampling approach was applied to ensure representativeness. Health literacy was measured using the self-administered HLS-M-Q18 questionnaire with an emphasis on the health promotion domain.
- Descriptive analysis summarized categorical variables using frequencies and percentages, while means and standard deviations were calculated to compare results between 2019 and 2023.

RESULT

Item 18 demonstrated the largest improvement from 2019 to 2023. **The proportion of respondents reporting that it was either "fairly easy" or "very easy" to take part in activities that improve health and well-being in their community increased from 70.8% to 84.7% between 2019 and 2023**, with the mean score demonstrating the overall improvement from 3.00 (SD= 0.785) in 2019 to 3.14 (SD= 0.715) in 2023.

Table 1: Frequency of Health Literacy (HLS-M-Q18) items by Health Promotion Domain: 2019 vs 2023

Domain		On a Scale from "Very Difficult" to"Very Easy" Would You Say It Is to:	2019 (n=9478)				2023 (n = 9758)			
			Very difficult (%)	Fairly difficult (%)	Fairly easy (%)	Very easy (%)	Very difficult (%)	Fairly difficult (%)	Fairly easy (%)	Very easy (%)
Health Promotion	Q13	… understand advice on health from family members or friends?	135 (1.3)	766 (7.3)	5514 (52.7)	3238 (30.9)	68 (0.7)	541 (5.5)	5839 (59.8)	3310 (33.9)
	Q14	… understand information in the media (such as internet, newspaper, magazines) on how to get healthier?	374 (3.6)	1298 (12.4)	4779 (45.6)	3202 (30.6)	154 (1.6)	926 (9.5)	5339 (54.7)	3339 (34.2)
	Q15	… judge how where you live (such as your community, neighbourhood) affects your health and well-being?	176 (1.7)	1132 (10.8)	5491 (52.4)	2851 (27.2)	106 (1.1)	654 (6.7)	5906 (60.5)	3092 (31.7)
	Q16	… judge how your housing conditions help you to stay healthy?	127 (1.2)	836 (8.0)	5548 (53.0)	3140 (30.0)	90 (0.9)	510 (5.2)	5632 (57.7)	3526 (36.1)
	Q17	… judge how your housing conditions help you to stay healthy?	127 (1.2)	836 (8.0)	5548 (53.0)	3140 (30.0)	90 (0.9)	510 (5.2)	5632 (57.7)	3526 (36.1)
	Q18	**…take part in activities that improve health and well-being in your community?**	369 (3.5)	1878 (17.9)	**4817 (46.0)**	**2602 (24.8)**	199 (2.0)	1297 (13.3)	**5173 (53.0)**	**3089 (31.7)**

Table 2: Mean Scores of Health Literacy (HLS-M-Q18) item by Health Promotion Domain: 2019 vs 2023

Domain		On a Scale from "Very Difficult" to"Very Easy" Would You Say It Is to:	Mean 2019 (n=9478)	Mean 2023 (n = 9758)
Health Promotion	Q13	… understand advice on health from family members or friends?	3.23 (0.647)	3.27 (0.591)
	Q14	… understand information in the media (such as internet, newspaper, magazines) on how to get healthier?	3.12 (0.779)	3.22 (0.674)
	Q15	… judge how where you live (such as your community, neighbourhood) affects your health and well-being?	3.14 (0.682)	3.23 (0.613)
	Q16	… judge how your housing conditions help you to stay healthy?	3.21 (0.648)	3.29 (0.605)
	Q17	… make decisions to improve your health?	3.18 (0.660)	3.24 (0.615)
	Q18	**…take part in activities that improve health and well-being in your community?**	**3.00 (0.785)**	**3.14 (0.715)**

CONCLUSION

These findings indicate increased engagement in health promotion activities among Malaysian adults. Ongoing policy support and community-based strategies can further strengthen population empowerment and improve equitable access to health resources.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our gratitude to the Director General of Health and Deputy Director General of Health (Research and Technical Support) Malaysia for allowing this presentation. We would also like to express appreciation for all support from parties that have contributed directly or indirectly in this study.

This poster was presented at 1st National Conference on Behavioural Sciences in Health (BSC26) on 6-7 May 2026 National Institutes of Health (NIH), Setia Alam)