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MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

TECHNICAL REPORT

EVALUATION OF THE I FIT AND EAT RIGHT (IFitEr) AT THE WELLNESS HUB



Institute for Health Behavioural Research, National Institutes of Health

EVALUATION OF THE
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMI	:	Body Mass Index
IFitEr	:	I Fit and Eat Right
NCD	:	Non-communicable diseases
NHMS	:	National Health and Morbidity Survey
MOH	:	Ministry of Health
SEM	:	Socio-ecological Model
WHO	:	World Health Organization

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We hope that the findings of this study will provide valuable insights to stakeholders, enabling them to further strengthen the IFitEr programme. Stakeholders can enhance the effectiveness and impact of the programme, making it even more successful in promoting weight loss and improving the health outcomes of the participants. We believe that the IFitEr can be further refined, contributing to broader public health efforts and better health outcomes in Malaysia.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2006, there has been an upward trajectory in overweight and obesity rates in Malaysia, as indicated by the National Health and Morbidity Survey. Consequently, several community-based weight loss initiatives have been put in place as part of public health efforts. One of the most notable community weight loss programme introduced by the Ministry of Health is "I Fit and Eat Right" (IFitEr). It is being carried out in various Wellness Hubs throughout the nation. The programme spans 24 weeks, with 12 weeks of instructor- led sessions followed by self-guided training without instructors for the remaining 12 weeks. From the results, almost two-thirds (66%, n=1,517) of the participants successfully lost weight within 24 weeks duration of IFitEr. This highlights the significant and achievable effectiveness of IFitEr in terms of weight loss. Comprehending the fundamental elements that play a role in the success of IFitEr is crucial for stakeholders to further improve the programme effectiveness for the wellbeing of community members. As such, this study aimed to assess the overall effectiveness of the IFitEr intervention and evaluate the factors that support weight loss and behaviour change. In this cross-sectional study, a total of 1,081 responses were from the self- administered questionnaires distributed via Google Forms, yielding a response rate of 37%. The survey included IFitEr participants who completed the intervention at various Wellness Hubs throughout Malaysia from 2018 to 2020. The highest response was received from Wellness Hubs of Seberang Jaya, Pulau Pinang and Tandek, Kota Marudu, Sabah. The majority of participants were females (83.5%). The most predominant age group was 30 to 39 years old, comprising 41.6% of the participants. Approximately 41.7% of the participants join IFitEr for the first time while 31.5% had participated more than four times. Among the participants who had joined IFitEr more than four times, the highest number was recorded at the Wellness Hub UTC Perlis (16.2%), followed by Wellness Hub Bangi (8.2%). Impressively, 89.4% of the participants reported successful weight loss after they participated in IFitEr. There was a significant reduction in BMI before and after IFitEr, with a mean difference of 3.09 kg. According to the Socio-Ecological Model, individual factors emerged as the most significant contributor to the success of IFitEr, with a mean score of 4.10 (92.6%). However, 205 individuals (19.6%) reported difficulties in managing their weight after completing IFitEr. Another 223 respondents (20.6%) indicated that they were unable to exercise without the assistance of a trainer. The majority (45.1%) of participants obtained information about IFitEr from friends and family members and their primary motivation for participating in IFitEr was the desire to lose weight, with 84.8% of them indicating this as their main reason for participating. Overall, the significant changes in pre and post BMI demonstrated the success of the IFItEr. Future studies can incorporate qualitative methods to gain deeper insights from the participants.





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