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TECHNICAL REPORT

EVALUATION OF THE HEALTHY LIVING CULTURE INITIATIVE OF THE AGENDA NASIONAL MALAYSIA SIHAT (ANMS)



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NMRR ID-21-1422-60499 (IIR)

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANMS	Agenda Nasional Malaysia Sihat
BMI	Body Mass Index
BMSS	Wellness Month (Bulan Malaysia Sihat Sejahtera)
COMBI	Communication For Behavioural Impact
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
GBD	The Global Burden Of Diseases, Injuries, And Risk Factors Study
HBM	Health Belief Model
HePiLi	Health Promotion In Learning Institutions
IHBR	Institute For Health Behavioural Research, MOH
KOSPEN	Healthy Community Builds the Nation (Komuniti Sihat Pembina Negara)
MHLI	Malaysian Healthy Lifestyle Index
MOH	Ministry Of Health
MREC	Medical Research Ethics Committee
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PIS	Patient Information Sheet
PSS	Healthy and Prosperous Putrajaya Strategic Plan (Pelan Strategik Putrajaya Sihat Sejahtera)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TPB	Theory Of Planned Behaviour
WHO	World Health Organization
WOW	Wellness On Wheels

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading cause of mortality worldwide, accounting for approximately 70% of deaths globally in 2016 (WHO, 2018). In response, countries worldwide have implemented national health initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging nutritious diets, regular physical activity, and reduced tobacco and alcohol consumption. In Malaysia, the Agenda Nasional Malaysia Sihat (ANMS) represents a transformative initiative aimed at fostering a healthy living culture through a comprehensive whole-of-nation approach. Launched in 2020 and endorsed by the Malaysian Cabinet, ANMS integrates sustainability and health promotion, engaging government agencies, private entities, and communities to prioritize prevention and wellness for long-term public health improvements.

This study evaluates the Healthy Living Culture Initiative under the Agenda Nasional Malaysia Sihat (ANMS), with a focus on its effectiveness in promoting and sustaining healthy behaviors among Malaysians. A cross-sectional survey of 2,000 respondents who participated in at least one ANMS activity revealed several key findings. Health campaign programs, such as Wellness Month (Bulan Malaysia Sihat Sejahtera, BMSS) and Jelajah ANMS, recorded the highest participation rates, with 68.35% of respondents attending these activities. Notably, over 75% of participants reported involvement in more than one health-related activity, indicating a strong level of sustained engagement. Furthermore, over 90% of respondents stated that the ANMS campaigns motivated them to adopt healthier lifestyles, underscoring the initiative's effectiveness in driving positive behavioural changes.

Despite the high motivation levels observed, the study identified critical gaps in physical activity and dietary habits among respondents. A significant 73.5% of participants reported insufficient engagement in moderate physical activities over the past two weeks, indicating a widespread lack of physical activity. Dietary practices also fell short of recommendations, with only 20% of respondents consistently adhering to the *suku-suku separuh* (healthy plate) guidelines for an entire week. Further analysis of daily fruit and vegetable consumption, as recommended by the Ministry of Health (MOH), revealed notable areas for improvement in dietary behaviours, emphasizing the need for more targeted interventions.

Mental well-being was another critical area assessed in the study, revealing mixed findings. Nearly half of the respondents (49.6%) frequently shared their problems with trusted individuals, indicating moderate levels of social support. Additionally, 98.8% of participants reported using stress management practices such as breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, and engaging in hobbies, while 89.6% demonstrated strong social engagement by maintaining regular contact with family and friends. However, significant barriers to seeking professional mental health support were evident, with 51.6% of respondents stating they would never seek professional assistance for stress management. This highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to reduce stigma and improve access to mental health services.

The findings underscore the ANMS initiative's instrumental role in empowering individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles. This empowerment is particularly significant in addressing Malaysia's dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, a challenge exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for effective public health strategies that address immediate health concerns while promoting long-term wellness.

To enhance the impact of ANMS, expanding initiatives like the *Pelan Strategik Putrajaya Sihat Sejahtera* beyond Putrajaya could improve outreach to wider populations. Strengthening the whole-of-government approach, fostering inter-agency collaboration, and focusing on healthy aging initiatives could further address the needs of Malaysia's aging population. Moreover, increasing community engagement through the development of Wellness Hubs in underserved areas and addressing gaps in physical activity and nutrition through tailored interventions are crucial steps toward a healthier society.

The evaluation of the Healthy Living Culture Initiative highlights both achievements and persistent challenges in promoting healthier lifestyles among Malaysians. Moving forward, continuous monitoring and evaluation of the initiative's activities are essential to ensure sustainable improvements in population health outcomes and reduce health disparities. By addressing these challenges and building on the successes of ANMS, Malaysia can create a more inclusive culture of health that empowers individuals to make informed choices for their well-being.



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