

# PREVALENCE OF RISK FOR EATING DISORDER AMONGST INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA MEDICAL STUDENTS AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS

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## INTRODUCTION

Eating disorders are a poorly understood condition characterised by severe psychiatric and medical manifestations, in which eating habits, physical health and psychosocial functioning are disturbed. College and university students are among the population who are prone to eating disorder. The aim of this study is to determine the prevalence of eating disorders risk in the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuantan campus amongst the medical students and to identify its associated factors.

## METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional study involving 200 medical students of IIUM Kuantan campus session 2014/2015 of both genders using a self-administered questionnaire through an online website which is a Google drive between 29th June till 10th July 2015. A proportioned of sample according to the ratio of number of students among each batch is calculated to represent each batch. The tool used was the Eating Attitude Test 26 (EAT-26).

Data gathered were analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences Programme (SPSS) for Windows, Version 20.0. P value less than 0.05 was considered significant and 95% confidence level was assumed for this study.

## RESULTS

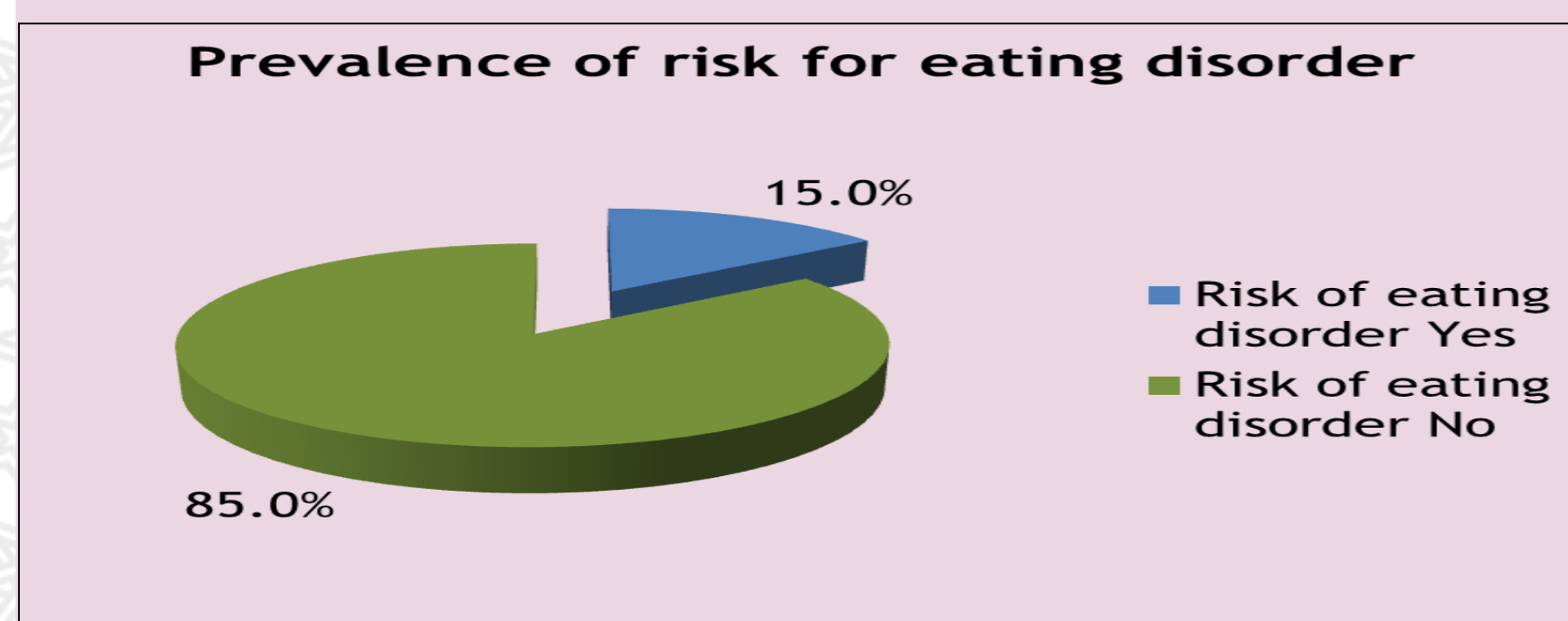


Figure 1: Prevalence of risk for eating disorder

Variables		No risk for Eating Disorder, n (percent)	Risk for Eating Disorder, n (percent)	Pearson $\chi^2$ (df)	p value
Gender	Male	51 (87.9)	7 (12.1)	0.55 (1)	0.458
	Female	119 (83.8)	23 (16.2)		
Marital status	Single	160 (84.7)	29 (15.3)	0.32 (1)	0.552
	Married	10 (90.9)	1 (9.1)		
Ethnicity	Malay	166 (84.7)	30 (15.3)	0.72 (1)	0.847
	Others	4 (100.0)	0 (0)		
Birth order	Eldest	54 (85.7)	9 (14.3)	0.75 (2)	0.686
	Middle	90 (83.3)	18 (16.7)		
	Youngest	26 (89.7)	3 (10.3)		
BMI categories	Under weight	20 (95.2)	1 (4.8)	4.37 (3)*	0.224
	Normal	125 (85.6)	21 (14.4)		
	Overweight	17 (73.9)	6 (26.1)		
	Obese	8 (80.0)	2 (20.0)		
Physical activity status	Not active	136 (84.5)	25 (15.5)	0.12 (1)	0.671
	Active	34 (87.2)	5 (12.8)		

\* Yates Correction

Table 1: Associated factors for risk of eating disorder

## DISCUSSION

The prevalence of those who have the risk of eating disorder in this study is comparable to the result from the previous studies conducted among college and university students in Malaysia<sup>1,2</sup> (between 10.0 to 18.2 percent versus 15.0 percent).

In term of factors which associated with risk for eating disorder, this study revealed that gender, marital status, ethnicity, birth order, body mass index and physical activity are all statistically insignificant to be the factors of risk for eating disorder. This findings are consistent with several studies conducted previously.

For gender, among the reasons that can be suggested here are that the onset of eating disorders are earlier in females than in males<sup>3</sup>, thus there is possibility of increase trend among male with increasing age. Limited numbers of non-Malay respondents (2.0 percent) has lead to the insignificant association between ethnicity and eating disorder risk because extremely small sample size is underpowered for statistical test and an inadequate power may lead to biased parameter estimates, or inconsistent findings.<sup>4</sup>

For marital status, findings is supported by Kiriike<sup>5</sup> where he found no significant differences in the diagnosis of eating behavior among groups of premarital, post-marital and single with the clinical features of eating disorders. Birth order is also not significant because according to study by Vandercycken & Van Vreckem<sup>6</sup> and Halmi<sup>7</sup>, eating disorders are dispersed equally among birth order. In term of BMI, it is in line with the results of a study by Czyzewska & Graham<sup>8</sup> where they stated that food preferences and eating behavior did not significantly differ among respondents with various BMI statuses, while for physical activity status, a person who exercises excessively or is physically inactive will not necessarily associate with eating disorders unless he or she does not practice a balanced diet.<sup>9</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This study revealed that the prevalence of risk for eating disorder among IIUM Kuantan campus medical students is 15.0 percent. On the same note, the risk is noted to be higher among single female of Malay ethnicity, being middle child, overweight and physically inactive; albeit none of these factors significantly associated with risk of eating disorder among this population.

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