

Thesis 2: Nutritional Consequences of Frequent Fast Food Consumption

Abstract

Regular consumption of fast food has become increasingly prevalent in modern society, with significant implications for public health. This study investigates the relationship between fast food intake and various health indicators among Malaysian adults. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with 500 participants and qualitative interviews with 50 households in Kuala Lumpur. Findings reveal that individuals consuming fast food more than four times weekly exhibit 45% higher rates of obesity, 30% increased blood pressure levels, and poorer nutritional biomarker profiles compared to those consuming fast food less than once weekly.

Introduction

Urbanization and technological advancement have converged to create unprecedented changes in how people obtain and consume food. The accessibility and affordability of fast food establishments have made them a dietary staple for many urban residents. This research investigates the correlation between frequent fast food consumption and various health outcomes, including obesity, cardiovascular risk factors, and micronutrient deficiencies. Understanding these relationships is essential for developing effective public health interventions and dietary guidelines.

Problem Statement

Despite growing awareness of fast food's health implications, consumption rates continue to rise, particularly among urban populations. Nutritional quality often deteriorates with frequent fast food consumption, as these meals typically contain excessive calories, unhealthy fats, and sodium while lacking essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Financial expenditure on food increases substantially, with individuals spending 40% more on fast food compared to healthier alternatives. Additionally, traditional cooking skills are declining among younger generations who rely heavily on convenient food options. There is limited comprehensive research examining all these dimensions simultaneously in the Malaysian urban context.

Issues

1. **Obesity Epidemic:** High-calorie fast food contributes significantly to weight gain and obesity prevalence.
2. **Cardiovascular Risks:** Excessive sodium and trans fats in fast food elevate blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
3. **Nutritional Deficiencies:** Fast food lacks essential nutrients, potentially leading to vitamin and mineral deficiencies.
4. **Increased Food Costs:** Regular fast food purchases strain household budgets compared to home-cooked meals.
5. **Addictive Properties:** High sugar, salt, and fat content may create addictive eating patterns.
6. **Cooking Skill Erosion:** Reliance on fast food diminishes motivation and ability to prepare meals at home.