

**UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
CONFERENCE**

**LE MERIDIEN CHIANGMAI, THAILAND**

**9-12 JANUARY 2012**

**DR. SAKINAH HARITH  
PUSAT PENGAJIAN SAINS KESIHATAN**

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**APUEN**

Asia-Pacific University-Community  
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## Community Nutrition in Action: Socio-Demographic and Nutrition Concerns in Rehabilitation Centres for Disability

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### Abstract

Government of Malaysia estimates that there are about 1.3 million people with various forms of disability; till 2010, there were only 280,000 of them who have registered with Department of Social Welfare (JKM). Community-based rehabilitation (CBR), a program that empowers persons with disabilities (PWD) to access and benefit from education, employment, health, social and rehabilitation services by using predominantly local resources. A total of 428 CBR centres were developed in Malaysia until 2010, which mostly located in district and rural area. CBR teachers are the direct personnel who teach, train and prepare meals for the PWD. The PWD are frequently affected by nutritional status impairment. A survey to reveal the socio-demographic and nutrition condition in CBR centres in 3 states: Perlis, Pulau Pinang and Perak was carried out. It was aimed to identify the possible nutritional problems and risk factors among the PWD and to highlight the problems faced by the teachers in food and nutrition management. This survey involved 165 CBR teachers from 43 centres. It was conducted by visits to each centre and interview sessions with their teachers. The result of interviews showed that the nutrition knowledge and exposure among CBR teachers were limited. CBR teachers also encountered various nutrition problems among the PWD such as chewing and swallowing difficulties, 'picky' eating behaviour, underweight and overweight problem, and insufficient food budget. This phenomenon raises concerns to formulate more specific and sustainable interventional strategies for the teachers especially in food and nutrition. As playing part of the role in university-community engagement, innovative and creative approach to empower the individuals and communities with nutritional knowledge is crucial. Mutual contribution and cooperation from each character in the society are needed to bring goodness to the welfare of the PWD.

### 74| Poster Presentation

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## Sustainable USM-Community Engagement to Approach the Nutritional Aspects of Children with Disabilities in Community-based Rehabilitation Centres

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### Abstract

Disability and developmental problems in childhood have raised public concerns in recent years. This issue is recommended to be managed by multidisciplinary approach including nutrition component. Persons with disabilities are frequently associated with growth failure and abnormal body composition consequent to malnutrition. Before sustainable academic initiatives to plan for interventional strategies, baseline information is thus important in order to target a social-cultural sensitive and appropriate programme. The aims of this study were to determine the prevalence of malnutrition among children and adolescents with disabilities in Kelantan, Malaysia and to map the association between the respondents' socioeconomic and feeding characteristics in relation to their nutritional status. A cross-sectional study was conducted on 274 children and adolescents aged 2 to 18 years old (142 boys and 132 girls) who attended the community-based rehabilitation centres. The survey demonstrated the overall prevalence of underweight based on BMI-for-age was 21.5%; overweight and obese were 10.9% and 9.9% respectively. The underweight respondents (n=59) were compared with a randomly selected group of normal weight respondents (n=59). Results showed that there was no significant association and difference between socioeconomic characteristics such as mother' s educational level, household income, number of family members, birth weight, ambulatory and seizure status with nutritional status. In addition, there was also no significant difference and association found between feeding characteristics such as age of weaning, eating duration, eating ability and the need for food texture modification with nutritional status. Nevertheless, this survey revealed that the underweight disabled respondents had smaller birth weight; lower household income but more family members; needed longer eating duration; larger proportion of them required caregiver' s assistance for feeding and food texture modification, as compared to the normal weight disabled respondents. These findings are useful in targeting programmes and strategies for nutritional management among this population of bottom billions.

### 18| Abstracts

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