

Gender and ethnicity differences in lifestyle and stress factors among COVID-19 vaccinated medical students at a Private Malaysian University

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Background and Objective

- Global focus has been on the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.
- COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative influence on the world's population, especially on health, financial position, and social lives.
- Internet's dominance of the majority of activities, including learning and leisure time, has led to an increase in a sedentary lifestyle.
- Success of a student is greatly influenced by stress and lifestyle.
- Stress is decreased by living a healthy lifestyle and is increased by living an unhealthy one⁽¹⁾.
- Thus, the current study aimed at evaluating the gender and ethnicity differences in lifestyle and stress factors among COVID-19 vaccinated medical students at a Private Malaysian University.

Methods

- Study Design: Cross-sectional study.
- Study Tool: Lifestyle and stress questionnaire^(2,3) with 15 and 25 items respectively was administered online.
- Sampling Method: Universal sampling.
- Study population: MBBS students of MUCM.
- Inclusion criteria: MBBS students of all batches who were willing to participate.
- Exclusion criteria: MBBS students who were not willing to participate.
- Statistical Analysis: Multiple logistic regression.
- Sample size: 345.

Results

Age: Mean ± SD = 20.73±1.797

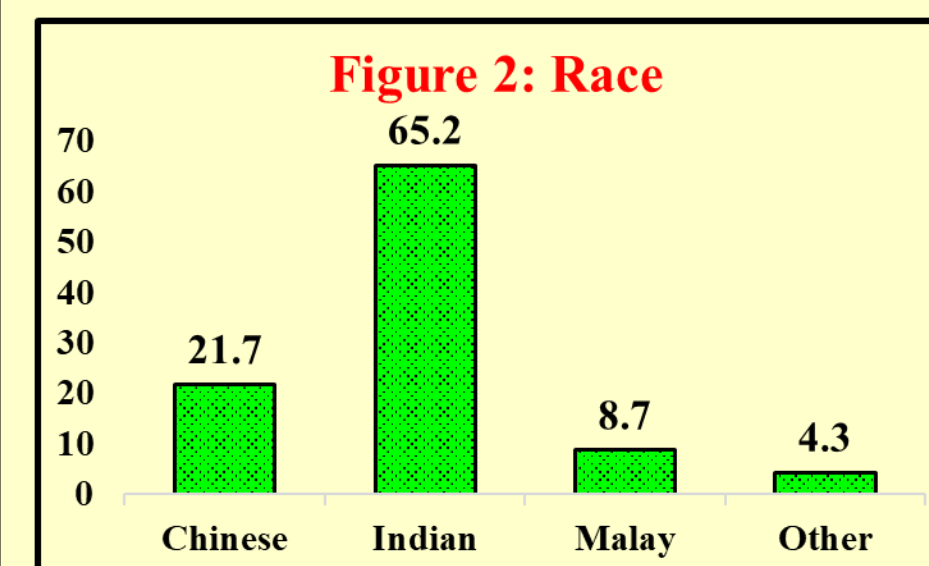
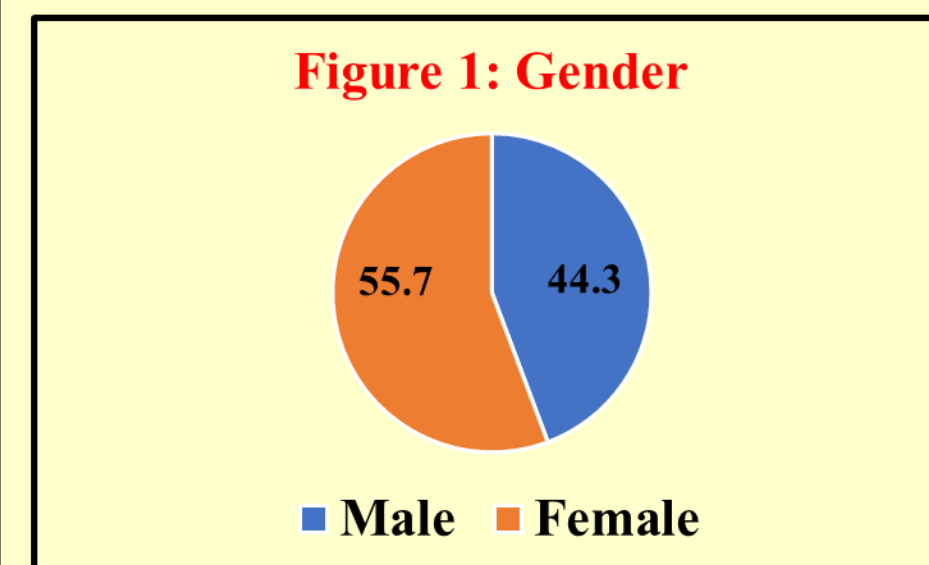


Table 1: Association between stress with gender and ethnicity

Q.No	Results
1	I frequently bring work home at night. Females are 1.7 times more likely to bring work home at night (p=0.032).
2	Not enough hours in the day to do all the things that I must do. Females are 1.7 times more likely to have insufficient hours to do all things (p=0.038).
13	My appetite has changed, have either a desire to binge or have a loss of appetite / may skip meals. Females are 2.2 times more likely to have altered appetite, have desire to binge or skip meals (p=0.001).
17	I experience mood swings, difficulty making decisions, concentration and memory is impaired. Females are 1.7 times to experience mood swings, difficulty in making decisions, concentration and memory impairment (p=0.017).
22	Increase in muscular aches and pains especially in the neck, head, lower back, shoulders. Chinese (p=0.024) and Malays (p=0.007) are less likely to have increase in muscular aches and pain especially in neck, head, lower back, and shoulders. Females are 2.5 times more likely to have increase in muscular aches and pain especially in neck, head, lower back, and shoulders (p<0.001).

Table 2: Association between lifestyle with gender and ethnicity

Q.No	Results
4	Do you exercise? Females are 2.4 times more likely to exercise infrequently (p=0.007). Males are more likely to have strict regime (p<0.001).
5	How fit are you? Females are 3.4 times more likely to be totally unfit (p=0.001), and 2 times could be fitter compared to males (p=0.014).
7	Do your parents or family members suffer from any illnesses? Chinese are less likely to have sick parents than other races (p=0.027). Malays are 9 times more likely to have sick family members (p=0.019).
8	Are you a smoker? Males are more prone to be social smokers (p=0.025).
9	Do you drink alcohol? Males are more prone to drink infrequently (p=0.002).
11	How would you describe your present working mood? Chinese are 10 times more likely to be capable of handling stress (p=0.006). Indians are 6 times more likely to be able to handle stress (0.011).
12	What do you do in your free time? Females are approximately 4 times more likely than males to watch television or surf the internet (p>0.001). Females are approximately 3 times more likely than males to lack free time (p=0.003).
14	When was the last time you fall ill? Malays are 7 times more likely to get sick in the last 3-6 months (p=0.05), and 9 times more likely to get sick in the previous year (p=0.036). Indians are 4.7 times more likely to become ill in the last month (p=0.043).
15	If you are totally honest, how would you describe your body size? Chinese are less likely to be obese (p=0.039).

Discussion

In accordance with stress, a few studies conclude that women tend to binge eat more frequently than men do, and they frequently lose control of their eating habits. Additionally, women tend to experience poor attention, distractibility, memory problems, and mood swings at a rate that is almost twice as high as that of men⁽⁴⁾. According to a study done among Malaysian schoolchildren, Chinese and Malay students have less neck and shoulder pain due to muscular aches⁽⁵⁾.

In terms of lifestyle, men are fitter than women since physical activity drops steadily when children enter school demonstrating that sedentary lifestyle increases the risk of obesity in older youth and women. Men exercise more for recreation than women, while women supposedly exercise more for weight loss and toning. Males are more prone than females to smoke in social situations as they find the drug less alluring than males⁽⁶⁾.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 outbreak has made a significant impact on the mental health, education, and daily routine of students highlighting the key challenges and providing an opportunity to further evaluate alternate measures in the education sector. The new policies and guidelines would help mitigate negative effects for the future health crisis.

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