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| **Is the Malaysian diet sustainable?** |
| **Background/Objectives**Malaysia, a middle income country, is currently experiencing climate change with extreme temperature and severe floods. One of the climate change mitigation methods is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGE) through the food system. In addition, change in food consumption pattern is also needed. A sustainable diet with low environmental impact which contributes to food and nutrition security and to healthy life; is the answer. This study aims to assess if the current diets of the Malaysian adult population is sustainable and healthy; as well as to determine necessary measures to promote a sustainable diet for the current and future generations.**Methods**Dietary data of a multiracial adult population (n=4600) was collected using a validated food frequency questionnaire with 136 food items. Carbon footprint (indicator for GHGE) data from foods were linked with the food items. The contribution of carbon footprint from each food item and total carbon footprint for each individuals’ diet was computed and presented. **Results**The participants were mostly Malays (66.7%), followed by Chinese (22.7%), Indian (9.7%) and others. Majority of them were females (82.7%), married (83.6%) and had tertiary education (87.3%). Both male and female participants’ nutrients intakes in total energy, protein, vitamin C and calcium were within the Malaysian recommended nutrient intake (RNI), while female participants did not achieve the RNI for iron, compared to their counterpart. The highest intake of food items were vegetables (270g/day), wheat, rice, fruits, sugar, seafood, poultry, legumes, snacks, milk and beef (46g/day). The highest contribution of carbon footprint were from rice, beef, sugar, poultry, vegetables, other cereals, seafood, wheat, milk, fruits, legume and snacks. Total carbon footprint from the participants’ diets were 30 kg CO2 eq/day. **Discussion**The Malaysian diets were comparatively healthy and had relatively low carbon footprint, compared to the West. The types of protein consumed were mostly fish and poultry which have low carbon footprint. Beef and milk with high carbon footprint were consumed in small quantities. High consumption of protein intake especially beef may not be a problem in the Malaysian diet. Further studies should be diverted to the types and sources of fish consumed among the population. Health promotion programs should highlight on the danger of overfishing and environmentally destructive fishing methods, so that there are sustainable fish sources for the future generation.**Keywords**Sustainable diet, greenhouse gas emissions, carbon footprint  |