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What is This?
Global School-Based Student Health Survey, Malaysia

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The Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) was developed by the World Health Organization in collaboration with UNICEF, UNESCO, UNAIDS, and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is a collaborative surveillance project designed to help countries measure and assess the behavioral risk factors and protective factors in 10 key areas among young people aged 13 to 17 years.¹ The main purpose of the GSHS is to provide data on health behaviors and protective factors among students to help countries develop priorities, establish programs, and advocate for resources for school health and youth health programs and policies; allow international agencies, countries, and others to make comparisons across countries regarding the prevalence of health behaviors and protective factors; and establish trends in the prevalence of health behaviors and protective factors by country for use in evaluation of school health and youth health promotion.

This Supplement issue contains a series of articles from the National School-based Student Health Survey, Malaysia and is sponsored by the National Institute for Public Health, Malaysia. The papers published in this issue include results related to physical health, mental health, sexual health, smoking, substance abuse, physical inactivity, nutrition, and injury. The article by Fadhli et al³ provides more details of the methodology used in the study, more details than could be provided in each individual article. The conclusions drawn from these various articles will inform the stakeholders of the importance of a healthy school environment in order to further promote and encourage academic achievement of these students.

The period of adolescence covered in this survey and reported in this supplement cover a period of importance in the development of healthy lifestyles. For example, the development of obesity or of tobacco addiction can be prevented at this age, while treatment as an adult is always

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difficult. Because of the dynamic nature of public health and secular trends in modern societies, this survey should only be seen as the beginning of studying the factors influencing young people’s health while they are at school. The findings of this GSHS will provide data to strengthen strategic plans and programs for health-promoting schools. The Ministry of Education, schools, and of course parents, are all important in achieving a school environment conducive to students’ health. More work is needed to promote better school health among school children, not only in Malaysia but also in other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

References