

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions and Research Findings

In a nutshell, among the hospital shift workers in Klang Valley, majority of them were physically inactive and minimally active. Most of the respondents were found to have good emotional eating habit, but poor external and restrained eating habits. Furthermore, their psychosocial well-being that were highly affected were mental health and sleep quality. In terms of their mental health, there was high prevalence of depression and anxiety with the percentage of 27.4% and 34.6%, but low prevalence of stress of 11.6%. Their sleep quality was also poor. Meanwhile, the hospital shift workers displayed good quality of life and average work engagement. These were assessed based on the series of questionnaires to determine their physical activity (IPAQ-M), eating habits (DEBQ), mental health (Malay-DASS-21), quality of life (WHO-5-Malay) and (Malay-SF-36), work engagement (UWES-M) and sleep quality (PSQI-M).

Lack of proper synchronisation of the fast and feeding cycle as well as sleep and wake cycle biologically might be one of the explanations that aggravated these undesirable problems. The pandemic of COVID-19 may also exacerbate the respondents' perceived psychosocial well-being, inactivity and altered eating habits in view of the high density of patients that necessitate their dynamic movement at work and high workload.

Some factors were associated with the mental health outcomes of the respondents such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, marital status, healthcare position, workplace, body mass index (BMI), physical activity, eating habits and sleep quality. Significant factors that associated with quality of life included healthcare position, department, workplace, comorbidity, eating habits and sleep quality. Meanwhile, work engagement demonstrated significant association with the factors of age, gender, ethnicity, educational status, marital status, healthcare position, department, physical activity, eating habits and sleep quality. There were also significant association between gender, healthcare position, workplace and smoking with sleep quality of the respondents. Interestingly, modifiable factors that associated with the psychosocial well-being of the hospital shift workers include physical activity, eating habits and sleep quality.

The development of SHiFT module was an initiative proposed in this study to help the hospital shift workers in improving their psychosocial well-being. The module primarily focused on enhancing the sleep quality of hospital shift workers by modification of a few associated factors including physical activity and eating habits in order to positively affect their psychosocial well-being. The SHiFT module achieved a satisfactory level according to the analysis of content and face validity, and this indicated the acceptability of the module among the hospital shift workers.

In conclusion, the psychosocial well-being of the hospital shift workers are significant determinants that should be addressed by the government stakeholder as they are crucial manpower in our community. This study provided valuable data on highlighted

issues, particularly on physical activity, eating habits, mental health, quality of life, work engagement and sleep quality among the hospital shift workers that could be improved in future research. Besides, the proposed module might contribute beneficial data to the body of knowledge as well as the stakeholder of Ministry of Health to make future intervention strategies related to the shift workers' well-being.

6.2 Strength of the Study

All data of this study was collected during the pandemic of COVID-19. Hence, it could be concluded that the data may reflect the real psychological condition of the hospital shift workers during the catastrophe. Furthermore, the data collection was conducted in the hospitals with a high daily patients' density. Since the data collection was conducted during the pandemic of COVID, this study could be a reference in terms of the data showing the level of conflict of hospital shift workers' psychosocial well-being, physical activity and eating habits during the pandemic for future study.

It is advisable for the policymakers to highlight on the significant predictors obtained from this study to develop future preventive intervention initiatives to maintain shift workers well-being. One of the novelties of this study was the SHiFT module, which was the first module in Malaysia to date to include the initiative in enhancing the sleep quality of hospital shift workers by modification of a few factors including physical activity

and eating habits, in order to give a beneficial impact on their psychosocial well-being especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.3 Future Research Recommendations

Future studies with shift workers from different industries must be taken into consideration to ascertain whether other industries share comparable predictive factors in preserving psychosocial well-being. Further research should emphasise on a longitudinal study to elucidate the causal relationship between the significant predictors and hospital shift workers' psychosocial well-being. Additional intervention programs should also be implemented based on the proposed module to determine its impact in maintaining the healthy lives and well-being of shift workers. Future occupational health policy may concentrate on the highlighted aspects in preserving the psychosocial well-being of shift workers.