

2021 | Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition Network

Webinar Report

Series 3/2021

Nutrition Activities during COVID-19 Pandemic in
Southeast Asia Countries

15 December 2021 | Zoom Online Platform



Partner Societies/Associations:

Supported by Educational Grant from:



Food and Nutrition
Society of Indonesia



Nutrition Society of
Malaysia



Nutrition Foundation of
the Philippines, Inc.



Nutrition Association
of Thailand under the Patronage
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Maha Chakri Sirindhorn



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Executive Summary

A webinar on Nutrition Activities during COVID-19 Pandemic in Southeast Asia (SEA) Countries was organised by Southeast Asia Public Health Nutrition (SEA-PHN) Network* on 15 December 2021 via Zoom online platform. The webinar provided a platform to share insights and experiences on nutrition activities e.g. nutrition promotion, interventions, innovations and researches amid the challenges and difficulties of COVID-19 pandemic. The one day webinar started with five presentations on nutrition promotion and intervention activities in SEA countries in response to COVID-19, followed by sharing by private sectors on nutrition effort in response to the pandemic. In the afternoon session, invited speakers from four SEA countries shared the nutrition and COVID-19 researches of their respective country. The panelists and audiences also interacted in discussion fora to foster additional sharing of experiences and opportunities to promote and improve nutrition in response to COVID-19.

*About SEA-PHN Network

Established on June 2014, the Network aims for a more effective implementation of public health nutrition measures to improve nutritional wellbeing of populations in the region. The current 5 members of the network, which are affiliated with the Federation of Asian Nutrition Societies (FANS) and the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) are Food and Nutrition Society of Indonesia, Nutrition Society of Malaysia, Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc., Nutrition Association of Thailand and Vietnam Nutrition Association. More details of the Network are available on the Network website: <http://sea-phn.org>.

1. Introduction

Good nutrition is essential to health, to build immunity, protect against illness and support recovery. The COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to rage across the globe, has highlighted the importance of good nutrition as key to strengthening immunity so as to combat the pandemic. Efforts to promote proper nutrition should be prioritised and be an integral part of COVID-19 response and recovery strategies.

Countries in the Southeast Asia (SEA) Region are facing similar burden of malnutrition, and increasing trend of non-communicable diseases prior to the pandemic. Nutrition action is needed, and more crucial than ever to ensure COVID-19 pandemic does not lead to malnutrition crisis, as well as to prevent non-communicable diseases that are risk factors for higher COVID-19 morbidity and mortality.

With the aims to share nutrition promotion, interventions, innovations and researches experiences undertaken by SEA countries amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and advocate timely exchange of public health nutrition experiences among countries in the region, the webinar on Nutrition Activities during COVID-19 Pandemic in SEA Countries was organised by SEA-PHN Network.

The webinar was attended by 168 participants including nutritionists, dietitians, nutritionist-dietitians, members of academia/researchers, policy makers, public health workers and other healthcare professionals.

This report summarises the presentations and discussions during the webinar. Several screen shots of the speakers during the presentations are included. A brief feedback by participants to the webinar is also given in the Appendix of this report.

2. Welcome Remarks

Welcome Remarks

Dr Tee E Siong, Chairman of SEA-PHN Network and President of Nutrition Society of Malaysia

Dr Tee E Siong, chairman of SEA-PHN Network delivered the welcome address to participants of the webinar. He introduced to the participants the objectives of the webinar and expressed that nutrition plays an important interrelated role in COVID-19 as nutritional status places important roles in health, immune status and severity of the infection; and that the SEA-PHN Network has organised this Webinar to share the research and nutrition activities related to COVID-19 in the region.

He briefly introduced the three sessions of the Webinar:

Session 1 – Sharing by nutritionists/experts from five countries (members of SEA-PHN Network) on nutrition-related intervention programmes in tackling COVID-19

Session 2 – Sharing by corporate partners on how they contribute to combating COVID-19

Session 3 – Sharing of researches in the region on the effect of COVID-19 on nutritional status of the population

3. Session 1 - Presentations on Nutrition Promotion/Intervention Activities in SEA Countries in Response to COVID-19

Presentation 1:

Webinar on Food and Nutrition during COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia

Speaker: Dr Siti Muslimatun, Head of Study Program of Food Science and Nutrition, I3L University

Dr Siti Muslimatun presented the activities conducted by Nutrition and Food Experts Society of Indonesia (Pergizi Pangan) during the pandemic, as well as activities by the Indonesia International Institute for Life Sciences (i3L).

The main activities conducted by Pergizi Pangan can be categorized into four types:

I. Online education

- National Nutrition Consultation to the community via online platform (i.e. WhatsApp) at the beginning of pandemic (April to June 2020), with the theme: Pergizi Pangan Service for the Country
- 42 consecutive days nutrition education during Ramadan themed ‘Cerita Mami Keren’ (story of trendy moms), focusing on education and discussion about foods, beverages, and healthy lifestyles

II. National webinar

- Weekly on-going Pergizi Pangan Webinar Series with the theme: Indonesia and Global Food and Nutrition Security – Innovation for Sustainable Development.
- Several other nutrition-related activities by Pergizi Pangan were embedded into the webinar series, including launching of ‘Nutrition Balance Song’, ‘Nutrition Balance Exercise’, and ‘Nutritional Status Check Apps’, and capacity building activities for related stakeholders

III. International webinar

- 2nd International Symposium on Food and Nutrition in 2020, with the theme Updates on Food, Nutrition and Probiotics Sciences: Implications for Better Programmes and Product Development, conducted every Friday for a period of four months (20 plenaries, 83 presentations on various topics).

IV. Other activities

- DoYouLead Leadership training by Pergizi Pangan in 2020, the third generation of the training would be conducted at end of December.
- Nutrition education activities by DoYouLead alumni

The main nutrition activities conducted by i3L:

- Monthly Food Science and Nutrition Webinar Series (August 2020 – January 2021) to share research experiences in the area of food science and nutrition.
- Mini symposium by the students from Agriculture, Food and Society course, in which the university students were grouped to conduct a small survey and present in a mini symposium opened to public.

Dr Siti Muslimatun shared that the webinar programmes were able to reach wide audiences and that participants gave good appreciation to the content and speakers of the programmes. She concluded her presentation by highlighted few of the lesson learnt (pros and cons) in conducting series of webinars during the pandemic as well as the keys to hold successful webinar.

Presentation 2:

Nutrition Promotion Activities during COVID-19 Pandemic in Malaysia

Speaker: Ms Siti Shuhailah Shaikh Abd Rahim, Senior Principal Assistant Director (Community Nutrition & Inter Agency), Nutrition Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia

Ms Siti Shuhailah Shaikh shared that nutrition promotion initiatives by the Nutrition Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic have been focused on digital and electronic platform i.e. the use of social media, in which the activities aim to encourage the community to take charge of their health through healthy eating habits and active lifestyle.

Some of the major activities included:

- Community nutrition promotion activities
 - Facebook Live with nutritionists, nutrition related COVID-19 messages, infographics, videos, virtual talks, articles on social media platform (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Telegram)
 - Collaboration with social influencers to create awareness and expand coverage among influencers' followers
 - Sharing of nutrition related information through electronic media and printed media
 - Use of smartphone application MyNutriDiari to help users in monitoring food and calorie intake
- Nutrition consultation in health clinics continued through physical or virtual meetings (e.g. Google Meet, WhatsApp, phone calls)
- Multi-stakeholders activities with non-government agencies, such as
 - Nutrition Month Malaysia 2021 (a collaboration among Nutrition Society of Malaysia, Malaysian Dietitian Association and Malaysian Association for the Study of Obesity and MOH) with the theme 'Nutrition: The Key to Combating Health Threats' to highlight the importance of nutrition to prevent non-communicable diseases and decrease severity of COVID-19

Ms Siti Shuhailah Shaikh highlighted some of the challenges in conducting nutrition promotion activities amid the pandemic:

- Competing with fake/misleading nutrition information
- Difficulty to change the community's behavior through digital platform
- Limited access to the messages especially for those without internet access

She concluded that more planning is needed and that more methods shall be explored to ensure the disadvantaged communities can have equal access to the nutrition messages.

Presentation 3:

Nutrition Promotion and Intervention Activities amid COVID-19 Pandemic, Philippines

Speaker: Mrs Maria Lourdes A. Vega, Executive Director, Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines

Mrs Maria Lourdes A. Vega shared the nutrition promotion initiatives by Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines (NFP) and how the nutrition activities have been adapted as a response to COVID-19:

- Community Nutrition Practicum for students of nutrition and dietetics programme
 - Involve different community service activities i.e. conducting household surveys, nutrition education for family, children and members of community.
 - Adjustments have been done for the practicum and related nutrition education for public to be conducted virtually and took into consideration several factors such as internet connectivity, limitations of virtual platform, schedule of nutrition workers and school policies.
 - Major challenges of virtual community practicum included unstable internet services, uncertainty of whether target audiences have actually viewed the post and the 'security' of the documents in Google drive which could be erased or revised

Mrs Maria Lourdes also presented the initiatives of other organisations in Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Policy issuance to support and ensure:
 - Nutrition actions relative to COVID-19
 - Nutritious foods in food packs
 - Continued delivery of health, agriculture and social services
 - Reiteration of 'no-milk' donation policy
 - Unhindered movement of foods from source to market with infection control protocols
- Food distribution
 - More fresh foods such as eggs, fish and vegetables in the food packs distributed
- Sharing of recipes using relief goods/emergency food packs
- Community pantry in which the community can donate or get the foods they need
- Online counseling on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) by a group of volunteer nutritionist dietitians employed by the local government
- Renewed interest in home gardening to encourage community to grow vegetables at homes or community gardens
- Food share programme
- Driving by the growing concern of the food security and nutrition during the pandemic, the National Food Policy was adopted to integrate and rationalise actions on food and agriculture sustainability and ensure good nutrition.
- Scaling up nutrition programme focused on strengthen online nutrition promotion using social media platform, and online training for key concerns e.g. nutrition education in day care centres.

Presentation 4:

Nutrition Promotion Activities in Thailand amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

Speaker: Dr Saipin Chotivichien Director of Bureau of Nutrition, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health Thailand

Dr Saipin Chotivichien presented the nutritional situation in Thailand and highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant impact on the double burden of malnutrition in Thailand:

- Disruptions in health promotion service e.g. growth monitoring & nutrition counselling, micronutrient supplementation and child development screening
- Lack of food in infant and young child and higher trend of children not receiving breastfeeding during the pandemic
- School closure leads to disruptions in healthy food and good nutrition delivery (e.g. Thai School Lunch, Thai Milk Programme) for children in kindergarten and primary school
- Changes in food consumption patterns and nutrition behaviours such as increase online food ordering, food stock up and reduction of physical activity

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the nutrition promotion activities initiated were:

- Encourage the community to have more nutrition literacy on nutrition labeling and making healthier decision
- Adjust the management model to address the problem of feeding infants and young children during the pandemic
- Encourage physical activity through mobile application development and national challenge 'Step Challenge: Virtual Run Project'
- Increase prevention measures: DMHTT (keep distance; wear mask; hygiene; temperature measurement and use of application for COVID-19 'Thai Chana').
- Counselling in health, nutrition and child development through LINE chat application, Facebook and village health volunteers
- Change of nutrition promotion patterns in schools
 - School Milk Programme countrywide supplied by Department of Local Administration; set up alternate days and classes for parents to receive milk from school
 - World Milk Day to provide milk for vulnerable groups and disadvantaged children outside school system
 - Development of food and nutrition management system in educational institutions
- Develop and scale up nutrition literacy including nutrition public relation for general population and risk groups and promote the reading of nutrition labelling

Dr Saipin Chotivichien summarised that the initiatives conducted are under the National Plan of Action for Nutrition and discussed the challenges to nutrition approach amidst COVID-19 response in Thailand in several areas such as creating health literacy, multisectoral collaboration and development of digital platform.

Presentation 5:

Nutrition activities during COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam

Speaker: Dr. Do Thi Ngoc Diep, Vice President, Vietnam Nutrition Association

Dr Do Thi Ngoc Diep started the presentation by sharing the COVID-19 situation and its development in Vietnam. It was highlighted that many activities have been conducted to prevent the infection as well as to help the community to stay healthy and ensure food safety during the pandemic. The nutrition related strategies to control the pandemic in Vietnam are in line with the National Nutrition Strategy 2021-2030 which include

- Leadership
- Capacity building
- Nutrition education and communication
- Nutrition technical expertise
- Technology cooperation

Among the policies/activities initiated amid COVID-19 pandemic included:

- Application of 5K (wear mask, disinfect, no gathering, declaration and distance) + Vaccine + Technology
- Multisectoral partnership (health administrators, policy makers, health professionals, academic institutions and communities) on nutrition activities e.g. leadership & nutrition technical expertise meeting
- Nutrition trainings
- Development of community guideline for nutrition management for COVID-19 patients (articles, tips, videos, menu)
- Free communication & health consultation activities by nutritionists and medical doctors for the community

Dr Diep also discussed the

- increased malnutrition risk in COVID-19 patients
- increased mortality risk amongst the malnourished patients with COVID-19
- roles of optimal nutrition and dietary nutrient intake in susceptibility to and progression of COVID-19
- nutritional management for COVID-19 patients
- nutritional requirement for COVID-19 patients

Concluding her presentation, Dr Do Thi Ngoc Diep shared the important lesson learnt from earlier pandemics, and her thoughts on the importance of robust public health system and support, training and education, and home care nutrition for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

4. Session 2 – Sharing by Private Sectors on Nutrition Effort in Response to COVID-19

Presentation 1:

How Nutrition can support in the fight against COVID-19

Speaker: Ms Goh Peen Ern, Manager Nutrition Communication, BENEIO-Institute, BENEIO Asia-Pacific

Ms Goh Peen Ern introduced the roles of BENEIO and the BENEIO-Institute as a science-based organisation that believes in connecting nutrition and health.

Her presentation focused on: lower blood glucose profiles, support of the beneficial microbiota, gut health and inner defence mechanisms

She shared the results of a consumer research conducted during COVID-19 pandemic on the health concerns of consumers in Asia Pacific which showed that people are more attentive to immune health during the pandemic.

The roles of glycaemia and the influence of the gut microbiota on immune health in the fight against COVID-19 were discussed:

- high blood glucose weakens the immunity and leads to more severe COVID-19 infection outcomes
- nutrition interventions with lower glycaemic options are needed to replace high glycaemic carbohydrates and sugars as most foods eaten in Asia are medium to high glycaemic
- the higher risk of developing high blood glucose among Asians
- smart ingredients from BENEIO to achieve lower blood glucose response – Palatinose™, ISOMALT, chicory root fibres
- incorporating Palatinose™, a slow-release carbohydrate, as part of a low glycaemic index (GI) diet in lowering and bringing more balanced blood glucose response
- incorporating Palatinose™ into recipe development as a way of reducing the GI of the food product to improve nutritional quality
- chicory root fibres to support healthier blood glucose levels – studies show that the more sugars are replaced with chicory root fibres, the lower the blood glucose response
- influence of gut microbiota in COVID-19; gut microbiota composition could play a role in influencing immune response and potentially influence disease severity and outcomes
- importance of the gut and balanced gut microbiota for immunity support
- chicory root fibres are scientifically-proven prebiotics that selectively promote the growth of beneficial gut microbiota, particularly bifidobacteria. This helps to strengthen the body's inner defence system and improve gut health, thereby supporting immune health

Presentation 2:

COVID-19 Response by The PepsiCo Foundation

Speaker: Dr Kit Phanvijhitsiri, PepsiCo Services Asia Co. Ltd

Dr Kit Phanvijhitsiri shared the efforts by the PepsiCo Foundation in supporting healthcare workers and addressing hunger in SEA countries. Among the major efforts initiated were:

- COVID-19 relief effort in Asia Pacific, Australia/New Zealand and China through provision of
 - funding
 - free meals
 - gift certificates for groceries and food packs
 - medical supplies for frontline hospitals
 - nutritious meals
- Give Meals, Give Hope initiative for local communities in Thailand
- Give Meals, Give Hope initiative for childcare centres
- PepsiCo Grow More initiative
 - An initiative to grow forest, save water, increase green space, revive watershed forests, rehabilitate nature and tackle PM2.5 for sustainability
 - Recruitment of more farmers through contract farming programme to help with the growth of potato, and to help benefit those who lost their job during the pandemic
- Education activities to the farmers on welfare and agricultural
- Donation of medical equipment to Thailand Ministry of Public Health
- Support field hospitals in all regions of Thailand during the COVID-19 peak outbreak with personal protection equipment, oximeters, drinking water and other products

PepsiCo, under the brand Quaker, also sponsored the COVID-19 Pandemic and Obesity Symposium at the Asia Oceania Congress on Obesity and Malaysian Association for the Study of Obesity Scientific Conference 2021. PepsiCo also conducted internal educations such as 'Ready, Step, Move... Give' Healthy Living Programme and suicide prevention initiative programme for associates in Australia.

5. Discussion Forum 1

Moderators:

Prof Dr Le Thi Hop, Council Member, SEA-PHN Network, President of Vietnam Nutrition Association &

Dr Rodolfo F. Florentino, Council Member, SEA-PHN Network, Former Chairman-President of Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc

Discussion forum was held after the presentations of session 1 and 2. Additional sharing of experiences and deliberations of the panels are summarised in the following paragraphs.

- The possible increase in the numbers of malnourished cases during the pandemic period and the necessity to address the needs of minority were discussed. Dr Siti Muslimatun shared that rapid survey conducted by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health (MOH) showed a change in food consumption pattern among children. In addressing the possible increase in the prevalence of malnutrition, Indonesia government is providing social safety supports in various forms (i.e. food, cash, employment, other subsidies etc.). The MOH Indonesia also provides guidelines on how nutrition services should be continued.
- Dr Saipin Chotivichien shared her views that clear guideline from the authority is the way forward to help address the needs of the minority groups. She gave examples of Thailand's experience in distributing milk powder and meals to children, and the mobilisation of village volunteers in the community.
- The panel members also discussed the challenges of using social media platforms to deliver nutrition promotion and education activities, as well as the strategies to address the nutrition concerns of certain groups who are not able to access to social media and electronic media. Dr Siti Muslimatun shared her views that majority of their target population are connected via smartphone.
- Ms Siti Shuhailah shared Malaysia's experiences that those without internet access were able to access to the educational flyers and leaflets prepared, and that volunteers from the locals as well as nurses were also empowered to help disseminate practical messages during home visits.
- In discussing the effectiveness of using social media platforms, Ms Siti Shuhailah shared that currently no specific measurements were conducted to determine the effectiveness in Malaysia, but the engagements by the viewers such as their involvements in Q&A sessions, total numbers of 'likes', 'shares' and other engagements were monitored.
- With regards to the effectiveness of using social media in improving knowledge, attitude and practices among the viewers, Mrs Maria Lourdes shared the Philippines' experiences that the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines monitors the number of followers, total numbers of viewers reached, numbers of 'likes' and 'shares'. She further shared that students from community nutrition practicum also did a contest on posting one's learning from the posts.
- The issue of fake and misleading news/information on food and nutrition following the extensive use of social media was also discussed. Ms Siti Shuhailah shared Malaysia's experience of having nutritionist social media team to respond to the misleading information on the social media.
- Dr Saipin Chotivichien also shared Thailand's experience in tackling misleading information in which the Ministry of Public Health collaborates with the Ministry of Digital, Economy and Society to screen for fake/misleading news that could be harmful to the community and give priority to response to that particular news/information through the 'response for health literacy' initiative.

She highlighted the challenge of fast spread of fake news and the need of better technology such as artificial intelligence system to handle the misinformation more effectively.

- In response to Prof Dr Le Thi Hop's question on the collaboration opportunities among SEA countries in the near future to further promote nutrition amid COVID-19, Dr Tee E Siong shared his views that the SEA-PHN Network has provided a platform for sharing and learning of experiences among SEA countries. Considering the unpredictable COVID-19 development in the region in the coming year, he expressed that nutrition societies in the region could think of more activities to be implemented in the future to support the government in combating the COVID-19 and pseudoscience. He also highlighted that the SEA-PHN Network would continue to do more in providing a platform for the countries in the region to share experiences.

6. Session 3 – Presentations on Nutrition and COVID-19 Research in SEA Countries

Presentation 1:

Effects of Tele-Exercise on body composition, lipid profile & fitness level of obese employee in Indonesia

Speaker: Mr Mury Kuswari, SPd., MSi, Ph.D. Candidate, IPB University

Mr Mury Kuswari introduced the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the productivities of employees and the potential increase in obesity prevalence due to the movement/activities restriction imposed by the authority.

He then presented different types of corporate wellness programmes available in Indonesia pre-pandemic, and the development of tele-exercise (real time or live virtual exercise) corporate programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Mury Kuswari shared the findings of a 12-week tele-exercise study (strength and combined strength cardio exercises) conducted on obese employees in Indonesia; the effectiveness of tele-exercise on body composition, lipid profile and fitness level of obese employees were discussed:

- Overall better body composition change in the intervention groups
- Improved lipid profile in intervention groups
- Improved physical fitness in intervention groups

The challenges in conducting the tele-exercise research during lock-down were also discussed

- Drop-out rate and compliance level, unscheduled meeting
- Interventions conducted in different settings e.g. work from home vs. work from office employees
- Exercise programme at the office without sports attires
- Blood sample taking

Mr Mury Kuswari concluded that tele-exercise (strength and combined strength cardio) in overweight employees have improved body composition, lipid profile and fitness level and that tele-exercise can be the right exercise programme for employees to be more productive.

Presentation 2:

Community Nutrition Research during COVID-19 Pandemic in Malaysia

Speaker: Assoc Prof Dr Chin Yit Siew, Head of Community Nutrition Unit, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia

Assoc Prof Dr Chin Yit Siew started her presentation by giving an overview of the COVID-19 development in Malaysia, followed by the community nutrition research in Malaysia. Among the local studies related to community nutrition during the pandemic discussed were:

- A study on socio-demographic disparities in the eating behaviour of Malaysian children during the COVID-19 lockdown, which showed no significant differences observed in eating behaviours according to age and parental income groups during the Movement Control Order (MCO).
- A study investigated the impact of poor nutrient intakes and food insecurity on the psychological health of middle-aged and older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic, which showed that 12% reported to have psychological distress and 14.8% have low food security.
- A study on COVID-19 restrictions and maternal experience and infant feeding, which showed that during-MCO mothers were more likely to have changed their birth plans, perceived insufficient breastfeeding supports and experienced changes in postnatal services since MCO; more before-MCO mothers had stopped breastfeeding during the MCO and started complementary feeding earlier than planned
- Physical activity, sedentary behavior and weight status of university students during the COVID-19 lockdown: A cross-national comparative study, which showed that most of the students were physically active; and Malaysian students devoted a significantly higher duration to walking and sedentary behaviour.
- Trajectories of food choice motives and weight status of Malaysian youths during the COVID-19 pandemic, which showed that 84.6% gained weight due to the confinement; 47-73% of the youths changed their food choice motives, and youths highly concerned for weight control were more likely to be in the weight loss category
- MyNutriLifeCOVID-19 survey which showed that 41.2% perceived their eating patterns were healthier during MCO, but 36.3% reduced their physical activities and 25.7% had a poorer sleep quality.

- Malaysia School Nutrition Promotion Programme (MySNPP)

Assoc Prof Dr Chin Yit Siew also discussed the research methodology adaptations (in terms of subject recruitment, data collection) during the COVID-19 pandemic. She concluded her presentation by sharing her thoughts on challenges, opportunities and suggestions in conducting research during the pandemic.

Presentation 3:

Nutrition Researches in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Speaker: Dr. Imelda Angeles-Agdeppa Research Director, Food and Nutrition Research Institute

Dr. Imelda Angeles-Agdeppa started the presentation by highlighting that the COVID-19 pandemic has made achieving United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals on zero hunger and ensure health and well-being for all more challenging, as the pandemic disrupted the major systems for improving health and nutrition across age groups, increasing the risk of hunger and malnutrition.

She then shared with the participants the mandates of Department of Science and Technology-Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI), and shared the researches activities conducted by DOST-FNRI in response to COVID-19:

- Rapid Nutrition Assessment Survey (RNAS)
 - Provided snapshot of the changes in food security, nutrition services and maternal and child feeding practices, and the results were utilized to guide the nation in intensifying strategies to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.
 - Some of the main findings presented and discussions were:
 - food insecurity significantly increased during the pandemic
 - factors affecting food accessibility during community quarantine period
 - food-coping strategies adapted by food insecure families
 - food assistance from local government units or private sector
 - food items included in the food packs
 - cash assistance for households
 - complementary feeding practices
- Beneficial effects of virgin coconut oil (VOC) against COVID-19
 - As VCO has been pushed as adjunctive therapy for COVID-19 patients, research was conducted to evaluate the beneficial effects of the VOC given to persons under investigation (PUI) who are quarantined in a PUI centre or hospital
 - Some of the main findings presented and discussions were:
 - VCO group experienced no more symptoms at Day 18, while the control group exhibited no symptoms only at Day 23
 - VCO compounds reduced the coronavirus count by up to 90% and improved cell survival of patients with COVID-19

Dr. Imelda Angeles-Agdeppa also shared some of the sciences and technology products and tools by the FNRI.

Several areas of challenges and the practical solutions in the context of doing nutrition research during the pandemic were also discussed:

- Risk of exposure to COVID-19 among researchers
- Limited contacts interview
- Higher non-response rate
- Unintentional exclusion of marginalised groups
- Internet connection
- Ethical challenges

In concluding her presentation, Dr Imelda shared her thoughts on the future needs and way forward for food and nutrition innovation in the new normal.

Presentation 4:

The association between online learning, food consumption behaviour, lifestyle, and quality of life of undergraduate students during COVID-19 restrictions: A web-based cross-sectional study

Speaker: Prof Dr Sirichai Adisakwattana, Chair of Academic Affair, Nutrition Association of Thailand

Prof Dr Sirichai Adisakwattana started the presentation by discussing the impact of COVID-19 on food and nutrition at global, nation, community and individual level.

He then shared some research papers on the impact of COVID-19 on eating behaviour of the population during the lock-down period.

Prof Dr Sirichai Adisakwattana also shared some findings of his research on online learning during COVID-19 restriction and the impact on students' health, eating behaviour, lifestyle and quality of life. Some of the main points discussed:

- Duration of online learning and food frequency of sugary beverage
- Duration of online learning and breakfast intake
- Duration of electronic usage for online learning and the quality of life
- Duration of electronic usage for online learning and the duration of sleep
- Students satisfaction and prevalence of depression, anxiety and stress
- Exercise correlated with increased daily consumption of fruits and vegetables as well as better quality of life among the university students

Prof Dr Sirichai Adisakwattana concluded his presentation by sharing the limitation of the research and his recommendations on way forward to address the nutrition and mental health needs/assistance for students.

7. Discussion Forum 2

Moderator:

Prof Dr Hardinsyah, Council Member, SEA-PHN Network, President of Food and Nutrition Society of Indonesia

Additional sharing and deliberations of the panels on promoting and prioritising nutrition related research in response to COVID-19 are summarised in the following paragraphs.

- **Maternal and child nutrition research during the pandemic**
 - In discussing maternal nutrition research in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic, Assoc Prof Dr Chin Yit Siew shared that there is currently no local published data on pregnant women. However, there are on-going studies in which the data will be available in the future. She further shared some of the challenges faced by researchers in collecting data from pregnant women during the pandemic.
 - Prof Dr Hardinsyah shared the Indonesia's experience in which the community nutrition research on school children has to be postponed due to activities restriction by the authority during the pandemic.
- **Recommendations for health authority/government on the changing food behaviours of the population following the COVID-19 pandemic**
 - Assoc Prof Dr Chin shared that the Malaysia's MyNutriLifeCOVID-19 survey showed that there was positive change in the awareness for healthy eating in year 2020, but the year 2021 survey showed an opposite trend in which the population has become more sedentary and shifted towards unhealthy food choices. She highlighted the importance of nutrition education and intervention, the needs of continuous effort in promoting healthy eating and active living, as well as addressing the psychological well-being of the population.
 - Prof Dr Sirichai Adisakwattana opined that the availability of more research data in the future could help in setting up the policies to provide education to the population. He also highlighted the challenges in setting up the policy to change public's behaviour especially in food consumptions. Using university students as an example, Prof Dr Sirichai Adisakwattana opined that the authority could consider reducing the online study duration to reduce sedentary time.
 - Mr Mury Kuswari stressed the need to incorporate simple and short exercise in between work/online study time in order to reduce the amount of time spend being sedentary. In response to a question on the prevalence of exercise among the population during the pandemic, he shared one of his researches that exercise duration and cardiovascular fitness among athletes in Indonesia have decreased during the pandemic.

8. Pictorial Report



Figure 1. Dr Tee E Siong, Chairman of SEA-PHN Network gave his welcome remarks to the participants

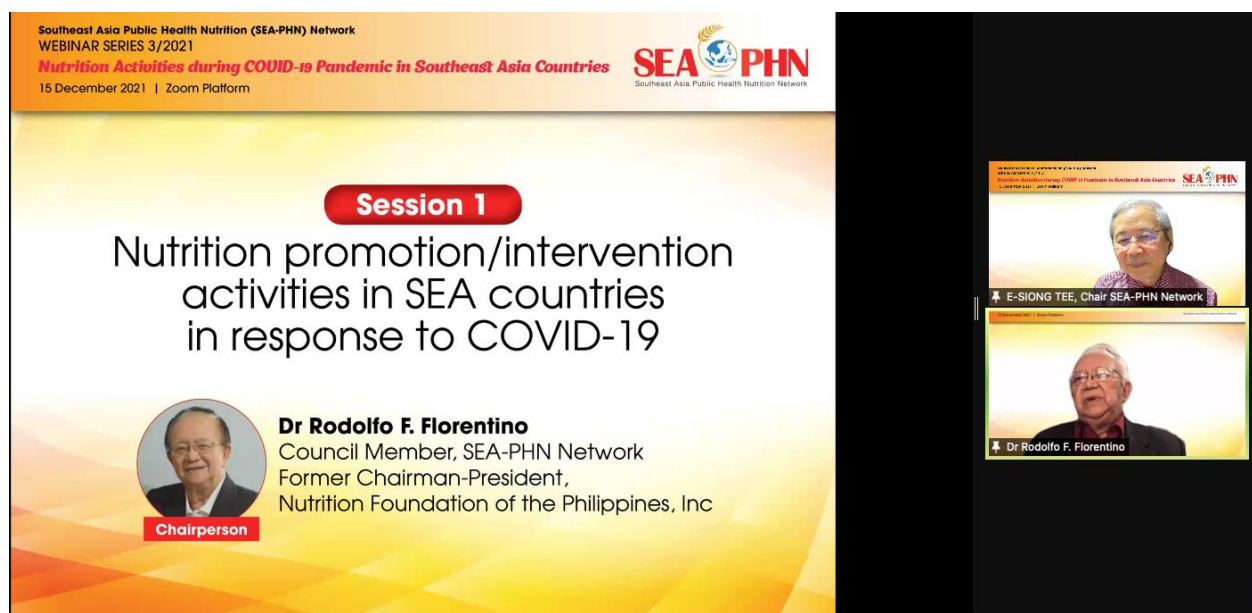


Figure 2. Dr Rodolfo F. Florentino chaired session 1 of the Webinar



Figure 3. Dr Siti Muslimatun presented on food and nutrition during COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia

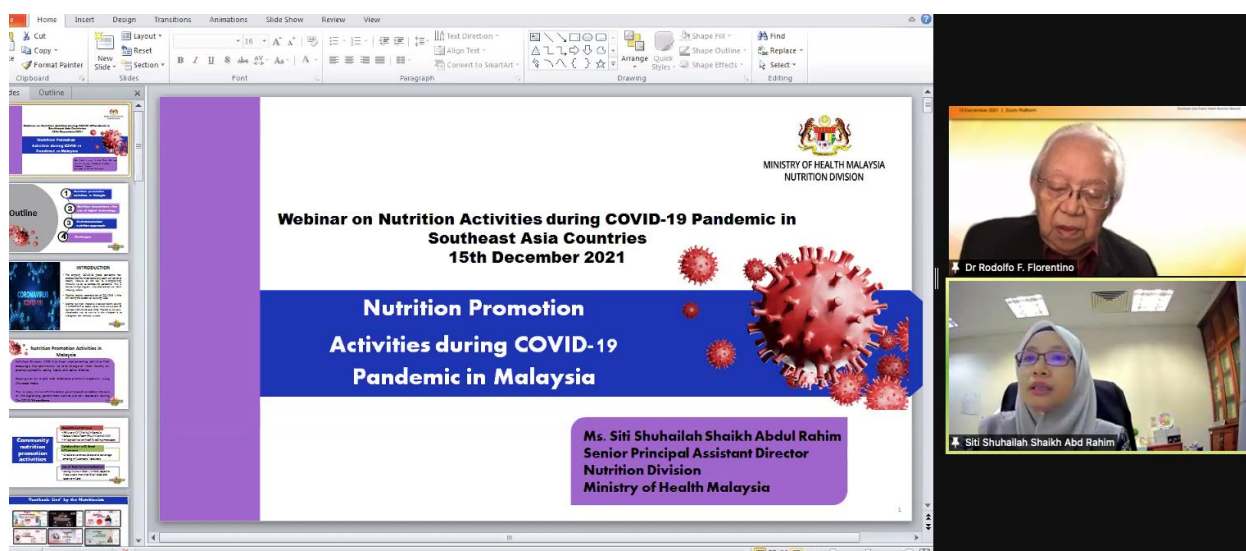


Figure 4. Ms Siti Shuhailah Shaikh Abdul Rahim presented nutrition promotion activities during COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia

Nutrition promotion and intervention activities amid COVID-19 pandemic

Maria Lourdes A. Vega, RND, MSN

Executive Director, Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines



Figure 5. Mrs Maria Lourdes A. Vega presented nutrition promotion and intervention activities amid COVID-19 pandemic

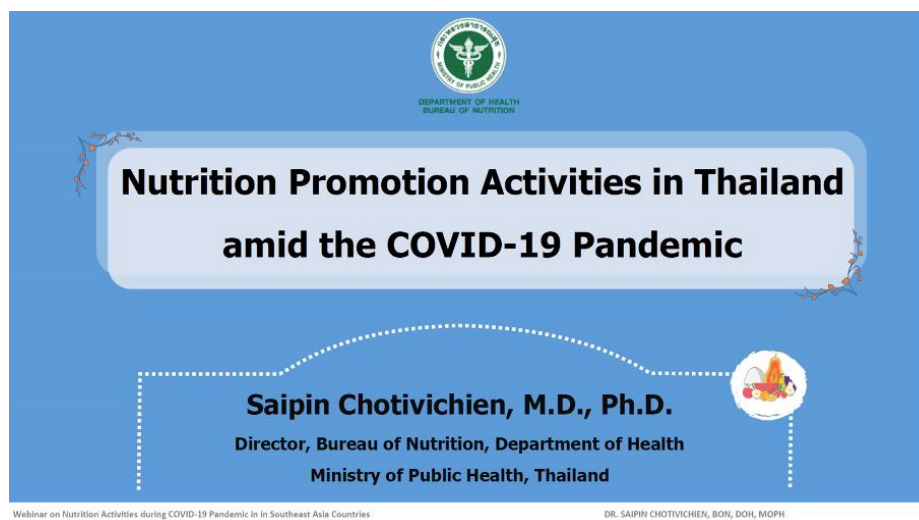


Figure 6. Dr Saipin Chotivichien presented nutrition promotion activities in Thailand amid the COVID-19 pandemic

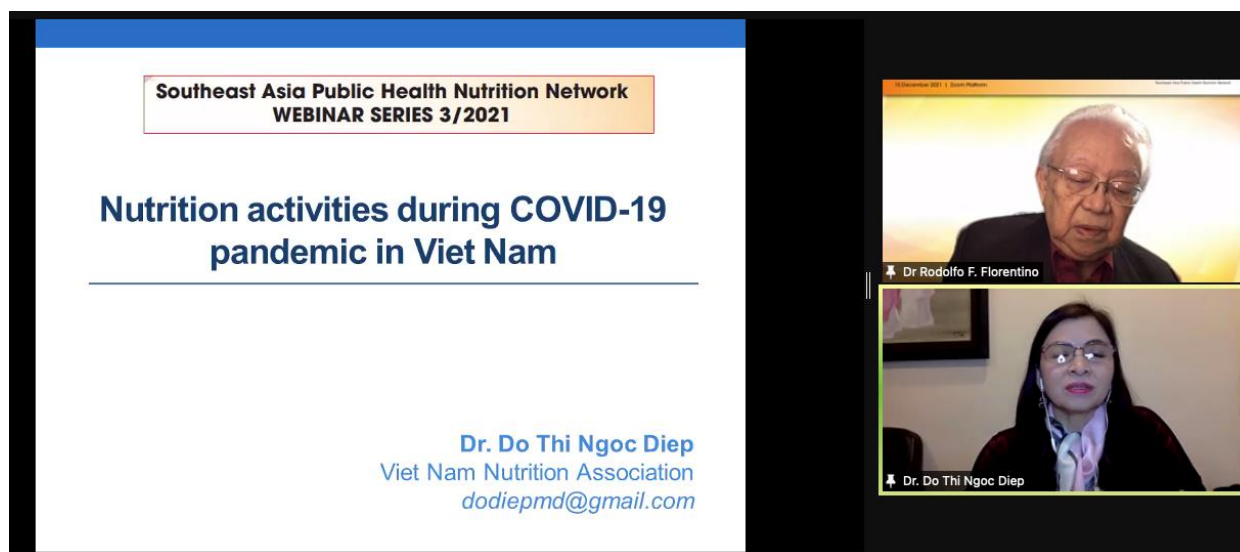


Figure 7. Dr Do Thi Ngoc Diep presented nutrition activities during COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam

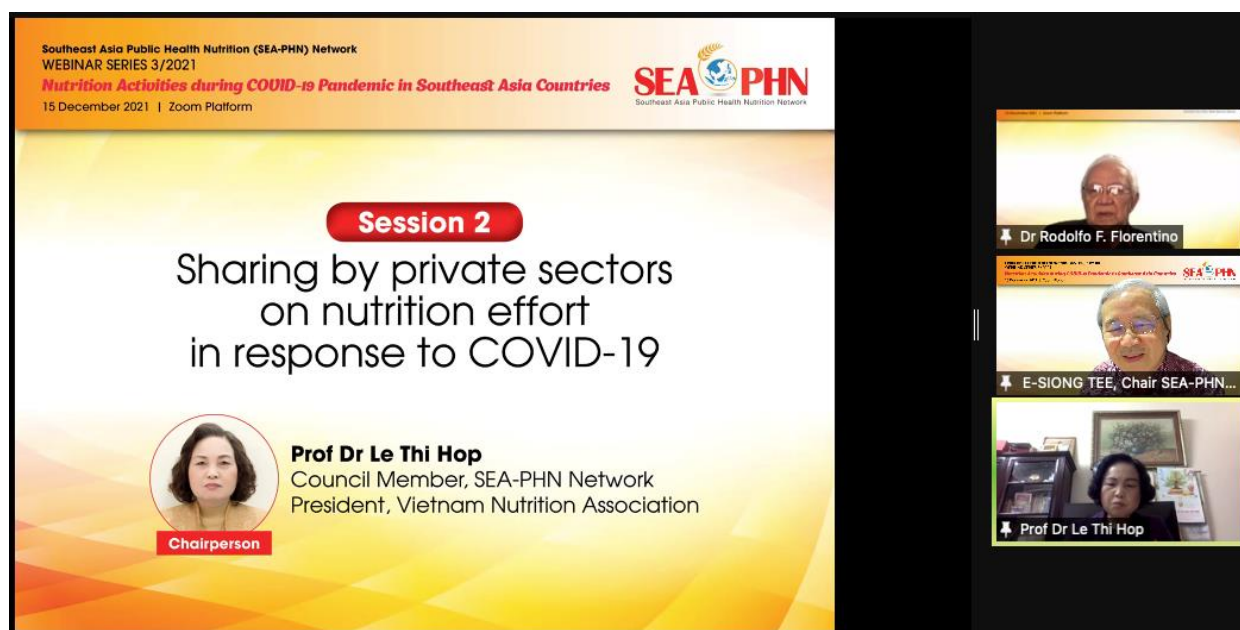


Figure 8. Prof Dr Le Thi Hop chaired session 2 of the Webinar

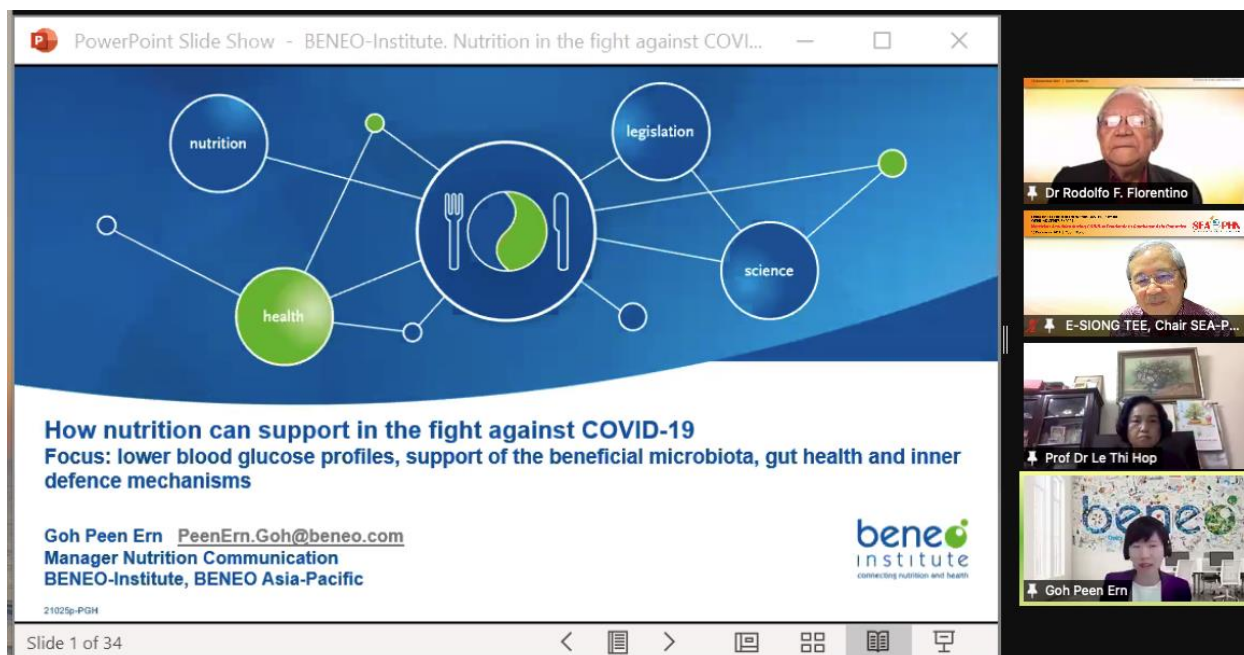


Figure 9. Ms Goh Peen Ern shared how nutritional products can support in the fight against COVID-19



Figure 10. Dr Kit Phanvijhitsiri shared the COVID-19 response by the PepsiCo Foundation

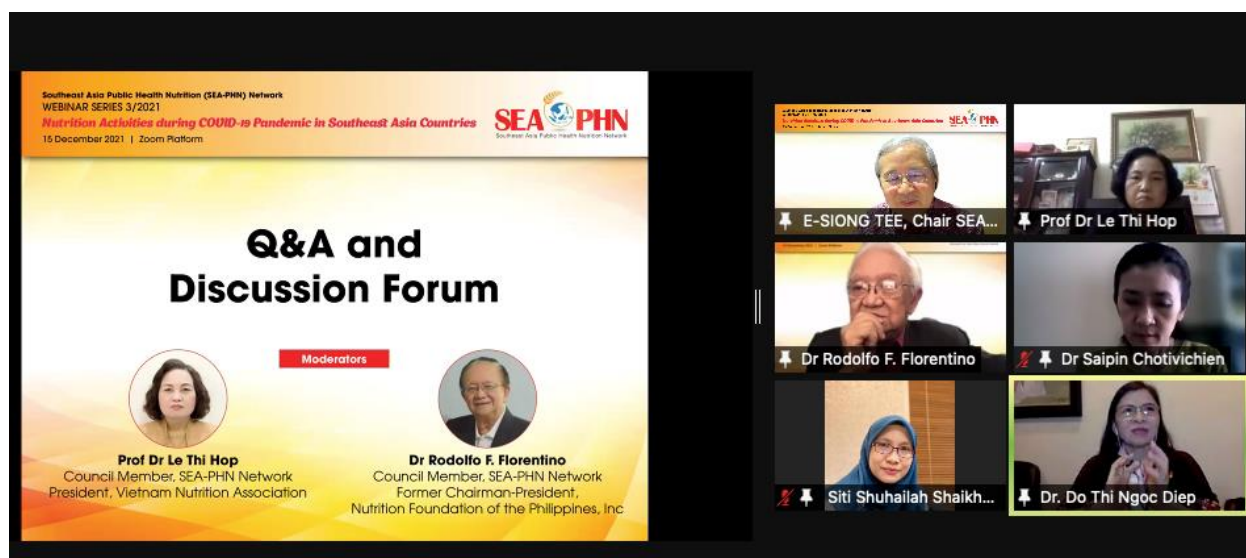


Figure 11. Prof Dr Le Thi Hop and Dr Rodolfo F. Florentino moderated Q&A and discussion forum 1 with all speakers in session 1 and 2 as panelist members



Figure 12. Prof Dr Hardinsyah chaired session 3 of the Webinar



Figure 13. Mr Mury Kuswari presented the effects of tele-exercise on body composition, lipid profile & fitness level of obese employee in Indonesia

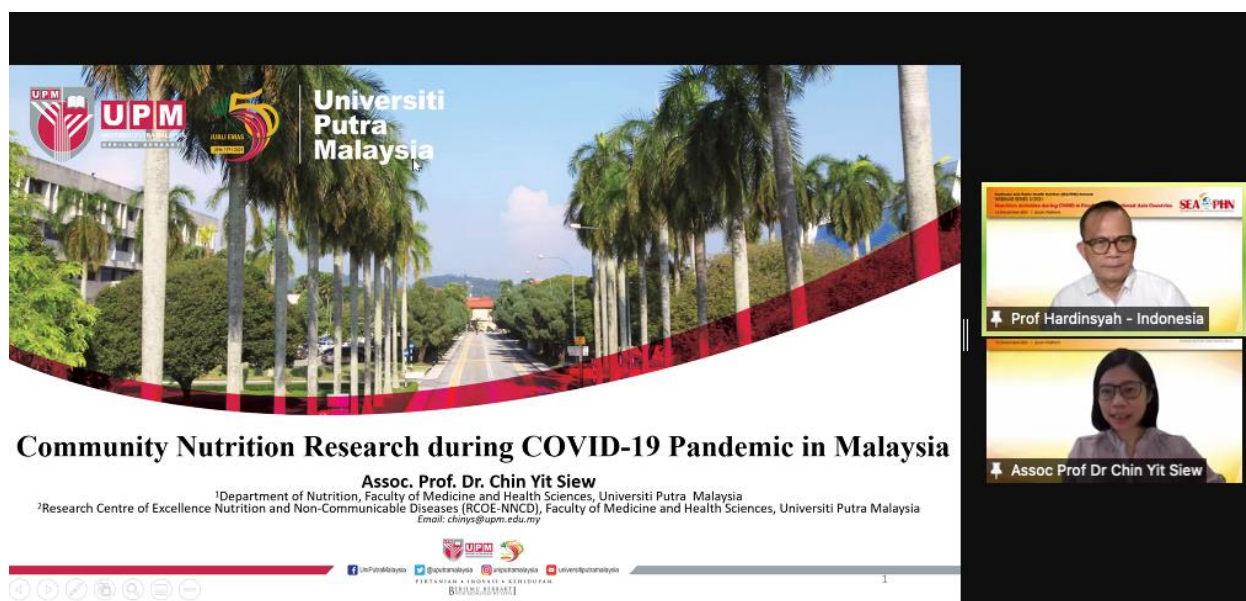


Figure 14. Assoc Prof Dr Chin Yit Siew presented community nutrition research during COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia

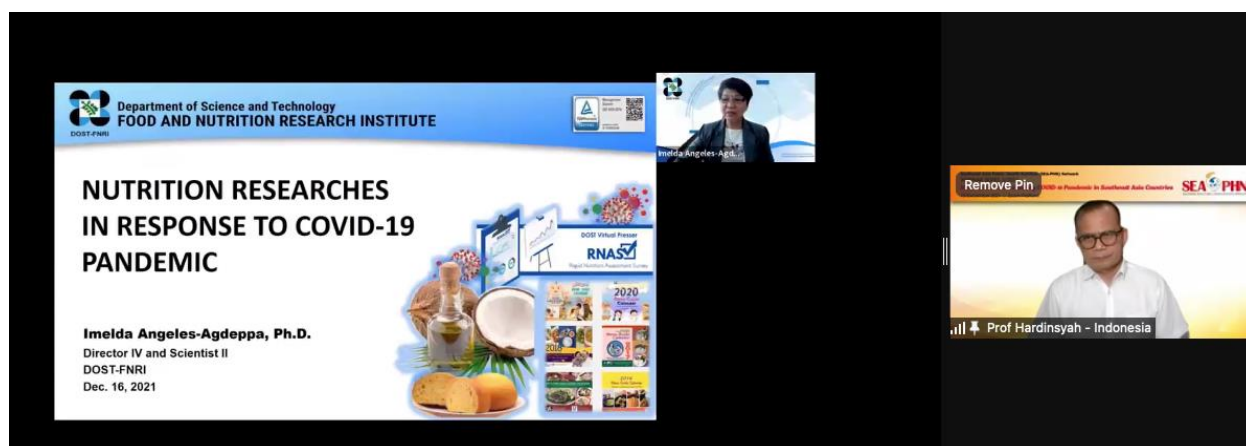


Figure 15. Dr Imelda Angeles-Agdeppa presented nutrition researches in Philippines in response to COVID-19 pandemic



Figure 16. Prof Dr Sirichai Adisakwattana presented the association between online learning, food consumption behavior, lifestyle, and quality of life of undergraduate students during COVID-19 restrictions



Figure 17. Prof Dr Hardinsyah moderated Q&A and discussion forum 2, with all speakers in session 3 as panelist members

9. Acknowledgements

SEA-PHN Network would like to thank all speakers for their presentations and serving as panel members for sharing their views and thoughts during the discussion forum. The Network acknowledges the educational grant/financial support of BENEIO-Institute, IFF and PepsiCo Services Asia Co. Ltd to support SEA-PHN Network and to enable this webinar to be carried out. The Network also places on record its appreciation to all participants for attending the webinar.

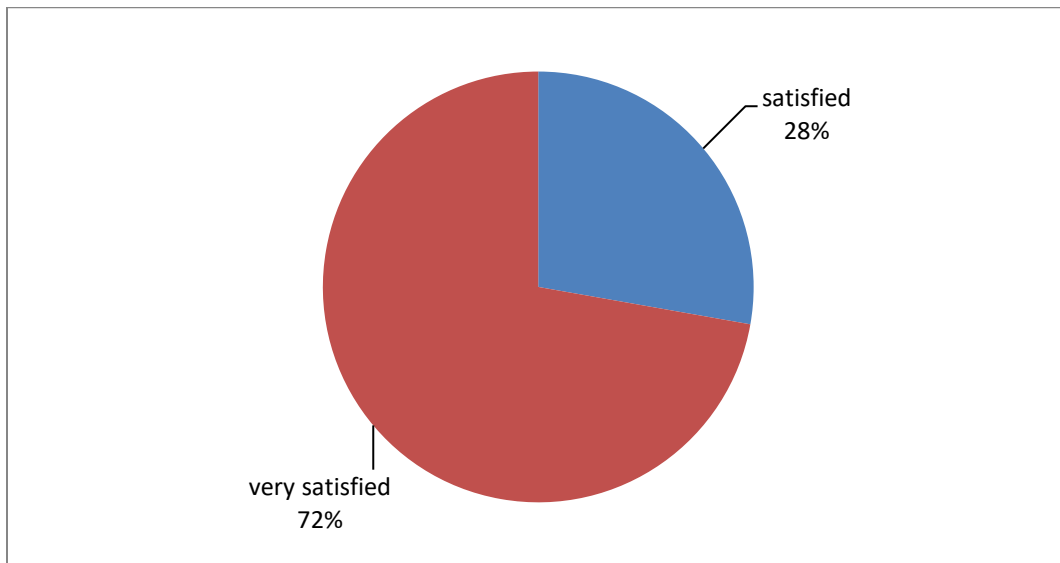
Appreciation is also conveyed to Versacomm Sdn Bhd for serving as secretariat for the SEA-PHN Network and to organise the webinar.

Draft report prepared by:
Versacomm Sdn Bhd, Secretariat of SEA-PHN Network

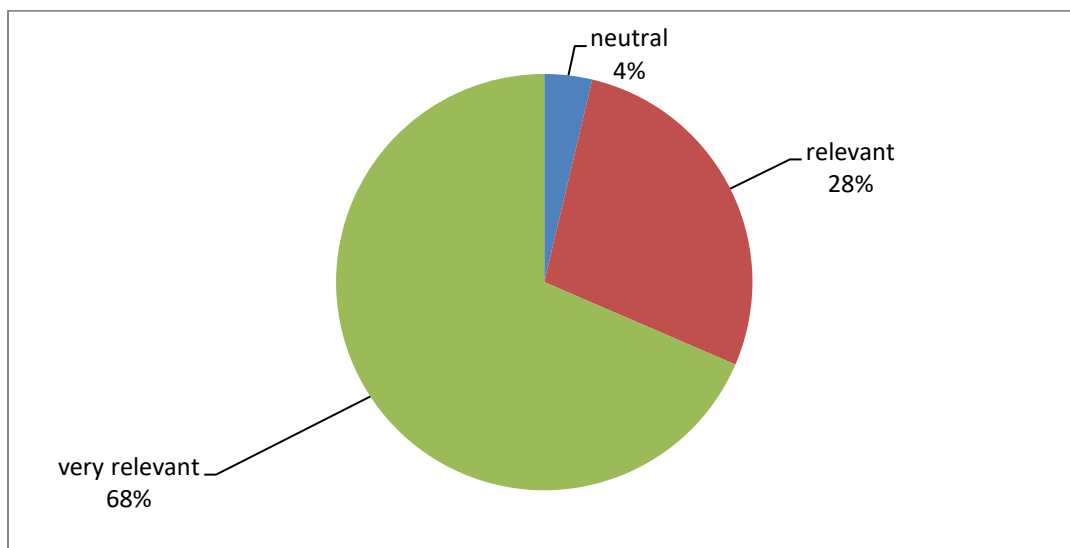
Report vetted and approved by:
Dr Tee E Siong, Chairman of SEA-PHN Network

12 January 2022

10. Appendix



Participants' satisfaction on the conduct of the webinar (flow of programme, timing & speakers presentation) (n=54)



The relevance of the topic of this webinar to participants' work (n=54)

Participants' suggestions on how the webinar could be improved

1. To allow participants to have access to video/webcam
2. To allow participants to have access to the recording
3. Shorter webinar duration
4. Allocate short 5-10 minute breaks in between sessions
5. To ensure the speakers are prepared with good audio system/Audio of some speakers could be clearer

Participants' priority of interests in nutrition-related webinar topics

1. Obesity
2. Child nutrition
3. Social media usage and nutrition promotion
4. Food security
5. Nutrition and immunity
6. Progression/advancement of the nutrition industry, how much it aligns with the SDGs and what more we can do to get closer to the goals and improve our society
7. Sharing of various and most recent nutrition advocacies/research across multiple stages of life cycle