

# The awareness of fake braces among Malaysian teenagers

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There has been an issue of fake braces, worn by teenagers and young adults as a fashion trend and symbol of status and wealth. The concern was that the appliances are placed by untrained individuals, without proper clinical investigations beforehand and follow up review afterwards. No studies has been done on the fake braces awareness among adolescents aged 17 years and below, as they are also susceptible to these 'stylish accesories'.

## Aim of study

To assess the awareness of fake braces on teenagers aged 17 years and below, and determining the association between the sociodemographic characteristics towards the usage of fake braces



## Methodology

After sample size calculation, 580 subjects from four secondary schools in Penang conveniently selected and administered a questionnaire



Self designed and validated questionnaire which included:

- a) sociodemographic information
- b) utilisation and awareness of fake braces



All data were analysed using SPSS software. Descriptive analysis were used to summarise the sociodemographic characteristics of subjects and their awareness of fake braces. Chi square test used to explore the association between sociodemographic characteristics towards the utilisation of fake braces

## Result



### Sociodemographic

- Mean age of 15.99 ±1.9
- 328 female (56.6%), 252 male (43.4%).
- Malay (394,67.9%), Chinese (175, 30.2%), Indian (8,1.4%), other races (3,0.5%).
- Parents education level – secondary school (57.2%), higher education (20.3%), primary school (3.1%)
- Estimated household income, less than RM3000 per month (39%), RM3000–RM6000 per month (19.5%), more than RM6000 per month (8.7%).

### Utilisation and awareness of fake braces

- Heard of fake braces (75%)
- Admitted to wore fake braces (3.5%)
- Know anyone who wear fake braces (43.9%)
- Know that provider of fake braces can be sentenced to court (35.2%) Friends (69.2%)
- How do you know about fake braces? Instagram (62.3%)  
Facebook (58.0%)
- Why people are wearing fake braces? cheap (72.4%), easy access (64.9%), looks pretty (62.2%)
- More than 60% aware on the effects of wearing fake braces (potential hazardous composition, damage to teeh, gums, possible infection of disease and uncontrolled tooth movement)

### Association between sociodemographic characteristics towards utilisaton of fake braces

No association noted

## Conclusion



- Only small percentage admitted on wearing fake braces but almost half of them knew someone who actually wore fake braces
- The top three sources of fake braces information came from friends and social media platform (instagram and facebook)
- More than 60% aware of the negative effects on wearing fake braces and yet agreed that fake braces are cheap and easily accessible

## Clinical implication

Since there is no association between sociodemographic characteristic towards utilisation of fake braces, perhaps the strategy of health education programs could focus on empowering teenagers to help their friends to adopt healthier behaviour, including saying no to fake braces

