

press release

Under embargo until 17 June 2022

Malnutrition is still a huge challenge among children in Southeast Asia

A recently completed study of nearly 14,000 children, aged 0.5 to 12 years, highlights an important issue known as the 'triple burden' of malnutrition. This is the coexistence of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight/obesity. These three burdens often coexist in the same country and can even occur in the same family. The large-scale study, commissioned by FrieslandCampina, was conducted between 2019 and 2021 by leading universities and research institutes in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

This new study follows the South East Asian Nutrition Surveys (SEANUTS I), which was presented in 2012. Overall, this second South East Asian Nutrition Surveys (SEANUTS II) show that stunting and anemia still exist, especially in younger children. However, for the older children, there is a higher prevalence of overweight and obesity. Also, most of the children do not meet the average needs of calcium and vitamin D intake and show vitamin D insufficiencies. This 'triple burden' makes it a matter of great importance to fill nutritional gaps with proper nutrition interventions and educational programmes.

Numbers show urgency of improving access to better nutrition

Commenting on the study's findings, Professor Dr. Poh Bee Koon, Principal Investigator for SEANUTS II in Malaysia and Professor of Nutrition at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Faculty of Health Sciences, Centre for Community Health Studies (ReaCH), explains: "Healthy nutrition is about balance, moderation and variety. If children don't get the nutrition they need, they won't grow and develop properly. Our new study revealed that more than 70 per cent of the children in all four countries did not meet the average needs for calcium and more than 84 per cent did not meet the average vitamin D requirements. These numbers emphasise an urgent need to improve food security, as well as the availability of food products that meet the children's needs, thus increasing access to healthy nutrition."





Professor Poh added, "The Malaysian Dietary Guidelines 2020 recommends that a balanced diet should consist of fruits, vegetables, carbohydrate and protein foods including two servings of dairy products per day". However, one in four Malaysian children consumes a portion size of less than 100 ml of dairy, fewer than five times a week. Dairy is commonly consumed during breakfast, yet, one in three children in Malaysia do not get daily breakfast.

Professor Poh also said, "Research shows that stunted children with an unbalanced diet are more likely to suffer from anemia and iron deficiency. Poor nutrition also has a negative impact on children's cognition and potentially on their future lives."

The undernutrition findings are highly alarming as the data is still behind the targets set by the Ministry of Health in the National Plan of Action for Nutrition of Malaysia III 2016-2025.

Margrethe Jonkman, Global Director, Research & Development, FrieslandCampina, states: "Research is key to getting a better understanding of local nutritional needs. The results from this study will help FrieslandCampina in developing better and affordable products that meet the nutritional needs of children and in setting up programmes to promote a well-balanced diet and active lifestyle in collaboration with local authorities, health workers and schools".

About SEANUTS II

The study was conducted in Indonesia, Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. In total, 13,933 children, aged 0.5 to 12 years, were recruited from urban and rural schools, community health centres and sub-district administrative organisations in these four countries. Principal investigators from leading universities and research institutes, together with their expert teams, were responsible for the study design. Together with the local mobile field teams, they conducted the data collection between 2019 and 2021.

SEANUTS II was commissioned and sponsored by FrieslandCampina. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the University of Indonesia (in Indonesia); the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (in Malaysia); the Mahidol University (in Thailand) and the National Institute of Nutrition (in Vietnam). The first study, SEANUTS I, was conducted in 2010 and 2011. Please find more details at seanuts.frieslandcampina.com.

The findings of SEANUTS II will be presented during a digital conference – [new insights on the nutrition and health status of Southeast Asian children](#) – on 17 and 18 June 2022.



For more information on the institutions, visit:

University of Indonesia (www.ui.ac.id); Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (www.ukm.my); Mahidol University in Thailand (www.mahidol.ac.th) and National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) – Vien Dinh Duong (www.viendinhduong.vn).



About Dutch Lady Milk Industries Berhad

Incorporated in 1963, Dutch Lady Milk Industries Berhad (DLMI) is a leading dairy company in Malaysia. It is owned by one of the largest dairy cooperative companies in the world, Royal FrieslandCampina NV, a Dutch multinational dairy company. Dutch Lady Malaysia was the first milk company to be listed on Bursa Malaysia in 1968, and the first to introduce Formulated Milk Powder for Children in Malaysia in 1988.

Dutch Lady Milk Industries Berhad, awarded as the Company of the Year 2014 by The Edge Billion Ringgit Club, manufactures and sells a wide range of quality dairy products for the home and export market, with all products enjoying a strong following in brands like Dutch Lady and Friso Gold. Through a unique collaboration between FrieslandCampina and four international research teams/universities, we initiated the South East Asian Nutrition Surveys (SEANUTS) study in 2009, involving four countries – Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand. SEANUTS is the largest and most extensive nutrition and health study ever done in South-East Asia, wherein 16,744 children up to 12 years old were surveyed over a four-year period. More information can be found at www.dutchlady.com.my.

About Royal FrieslandCampina

FrieslandCampina is one of the largest dairy companies in the world with a cooperative tradition going back 150 years. The company processes the milk from dairy farms into a wide range of dairy products and ingredients. This way Royal FrieslandCampina provides hundreds of millions of people throughout the world with valuable nutrients from milk. Royal FrieslandCampina N.V. is fully owned by Zuivelcoöperatie FrieslandCampina U.A., with 15,703 dairy farmers in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany as members. Through the cooperative, these member dairy farmers own and supervise the company. Together with member dairy farmers, FrieslandCampina manages the entire production chain: from grass to glass.

FrieslandCampina provides consumers with dairy products, such as milk, yoghurt, condensed milk, dairy-based beverages, cheese, butter, quark, and cream. The dairy company supplies specific nutrition to specific consumer groups, such as children, the elderly, and sportspeople. Professional customers, such as bakers, pastry chefs, chocolate confectioners, chefs, and caterers can rely on FrieslandCampina for a broad product range, including creams, butters, desserts, and fillings. In addition, the company supplies high-quality ingredients to international food producers and pharmaceutical companies.

FrieslandCampina has branches in 32 countries and exports to more than 100 countries worldwide. At year-end 2021, FrieslandCampina employed an average of 22,961 workers (FTEs). For additional information, please visit our website: www.frieslandcampina.com.

Issued by Dutch Lady Milk Industries Berhad

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