

Seroepidemiological survey of the prevalence of *Helicobacter pylori* infection in Sabah, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Gastric cancer is an important cause of mortality in Sabah, Malaysia, but the prevalence of *Helicobacter pylori* infection in this state is unknown. Serology is an important tool for the surveillance of *H. pylori* infection. The objective of this study was to determine the prevalence of *H. pylori* infection by serology, and to provide information for policy discussions on *H. pylori* control programmes in Sabah. Methods: This cross-sectional study analysed serum samples collected from blood donors in a hospital in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. *H. pylori* antibody concentration was measured using a commercially available kit. Results: The prevalence of *H. pylori* was 28.4% (204/718), and the infection rate was highest in subjects aged 30–39 years. Men were more likely to be infected than women. The *H. pylori* infection rate was highest among those of Kadazan (19.1%) ethnicity, followed by Dusun (15.7%), Bajau (14.7%) and Rungus (10.8%). Binary logistic regression analysis indicated that Chinese ($P = 0.026$) and Malay ($P = 0.035$) ethnicities were protective against *H. pylori* infection compared with other ethnicities. Conclusions: The seropositivity rate of *H. pylori* in this study was similar to the overall seropositivity rate in Malaysia; however, Chinese and Malay ethnicities were found to be protective against *H. pylori* infection.