

Nutrition society president defends corporate funding for research

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Dr Tee E Siong was quoted as saying that the risk of obesity in Malaysia would be worse without the companies' help, and he himself could not accomplish his goals without their support.

"There are some people who say that we should not accept money for projects, for research studies. I'm aware of that," he was quoted as saying.

"I have two choices. Either I don't do anything or I work with companies," he said in the report titled "In Asia's Fattest Country, Nutritionists Take Money From Food Giants".

He added that scientists needed the cooperation and financial support from companies who can supply much-needed resources.

"We have to stop blaming the multinationals," he was quoted as saying.

He added that the real problem among Malaysians was not the type of food they ate, but how much of it and their lifestyle.

"Malaysians are always eating. They don't exercise," he said.

"But you don't need to go to the gym. You need to walk outside. It's free. Get off your chair and move."

Tee was also cited as saying that he had used his position in the government to push for important steps to regulate companies, including a 2003 rule that required food companies to put nutritional information, such as the levels of fat, sugars and protein, on their packaging.

"We were one of the first countries in Asia to do it," he said.