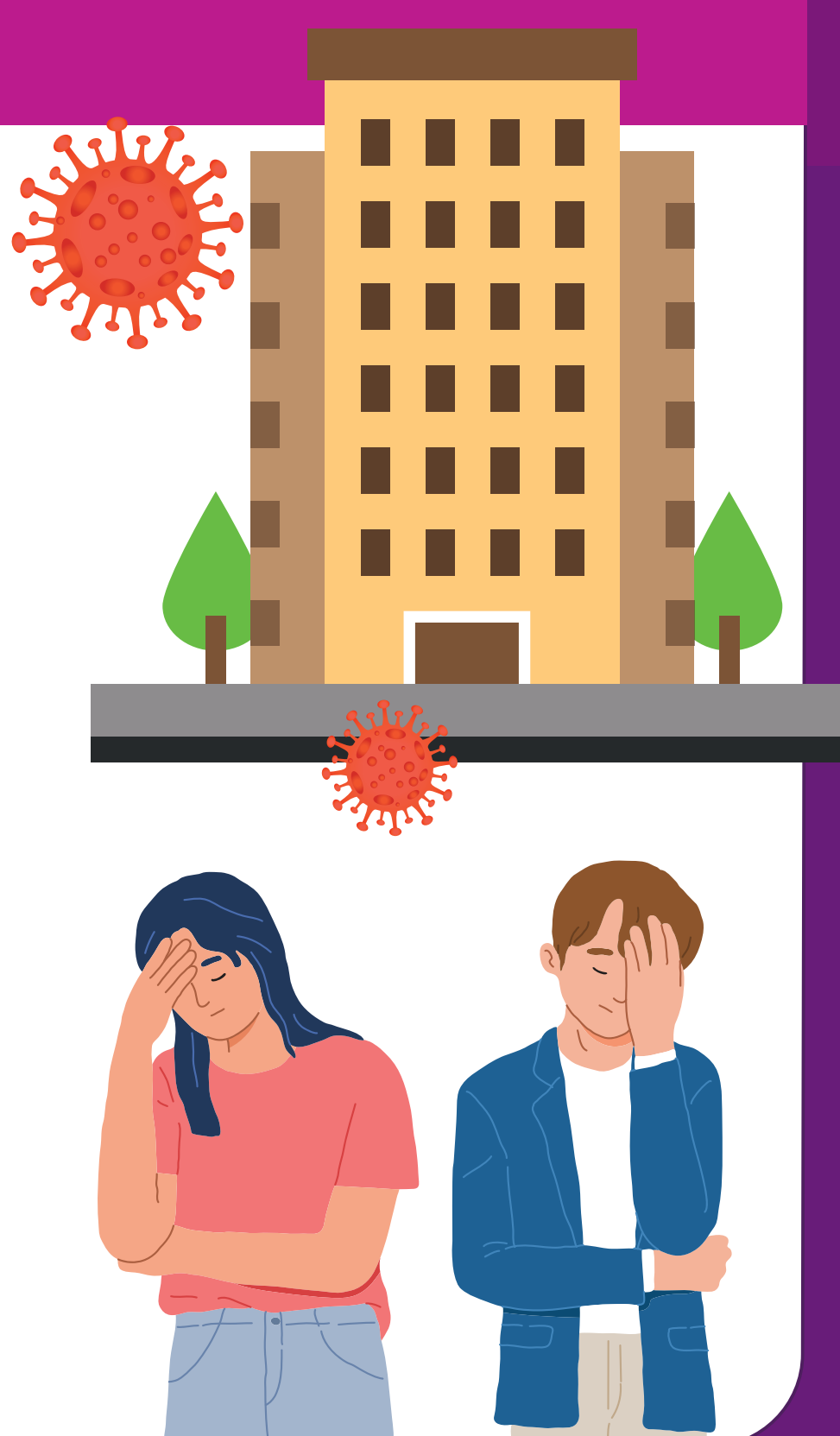


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## INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has had a massive, extensive impact on Malaysians, particularly those within the lower socioeconomic group (1) and live in PPRs. With various pre-existing socio-economic problems, adolescents of PPRs communities were bound to face lots of urban setting difficulties and challenges during the pandemic (2). The different periods and levels of lockdowns, restricted movements within already cramped and crowded living space, prolonged online schooling despite limited access to sustainable internet, poor living environments and family issues, etc. had easily caused distress to the adolescents' psychological and mental health. Thus their mental health status and coping strategies need to be studied and understood in order to recognise how their mental health and wellbeing are affected by the pandemic (3).



## PURPOSE

To determine the prevalence of psychological distress among adolescents living in the PPRs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design	Quantitative investigation
Sampling technique	Simple random sampling
Sample size	1,578 respondents
Target population	Adolescents aged 10-17 years old living in the People's Housing Project (PPR)
Study setting	37 PPRs in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor
Instrument	Dual language Questionnaires (Bahasa Melayu and English) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sociodemographic profile</li> <li>Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)</li> <li>Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7)</li> </ul>
Data collection	April 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022

## ANALYSIS

**Descriptive analysis** was used to describe the sociodemographic of the participants and the prevalence of mental health status is reported in frequency and percentage.

**Inferential analysis** was used to find the association between socio-demographic factors and psychological distress of the participants.

## RESULT

- 12.3% of the adolescents surveyed were found to be suffering from psychological distress.
- Of these, 10.7% have depression symptoms and 7.2% showed anxiety symptoms.
- A worrying 212 participants (13.4%) reported suicidal and self-harm thoughts.

### Mental Health Status of Respondents

Figure 1. Respondents With Depression Symptoms and Depression Levels

10.7% (n=168) of respondents have depression symptoms. In terms of their depression levels, 6.8% (n=107) showed moderate depression, 2.4% (n=38) showed moderately severe depression, and 1.5% (n=23) showed severe depression.

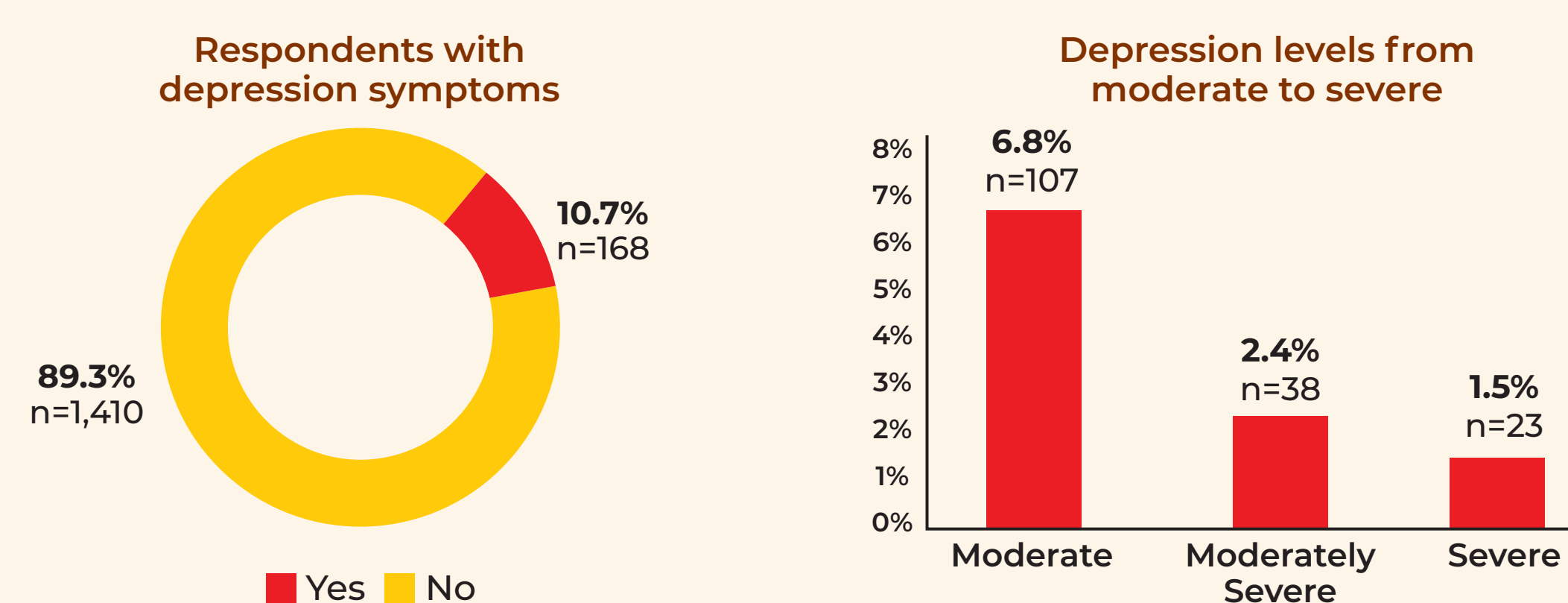


Figure 2. Respondents With Anxiety Symptoms and Anxiety Levels

7.2% (n=114) of the respondents showed anxiety symptoms. In term of their anxiety levels, 4.7% (n=75) showed moderate anxiety, and 2.5% (n=39) showed severe anxiety.

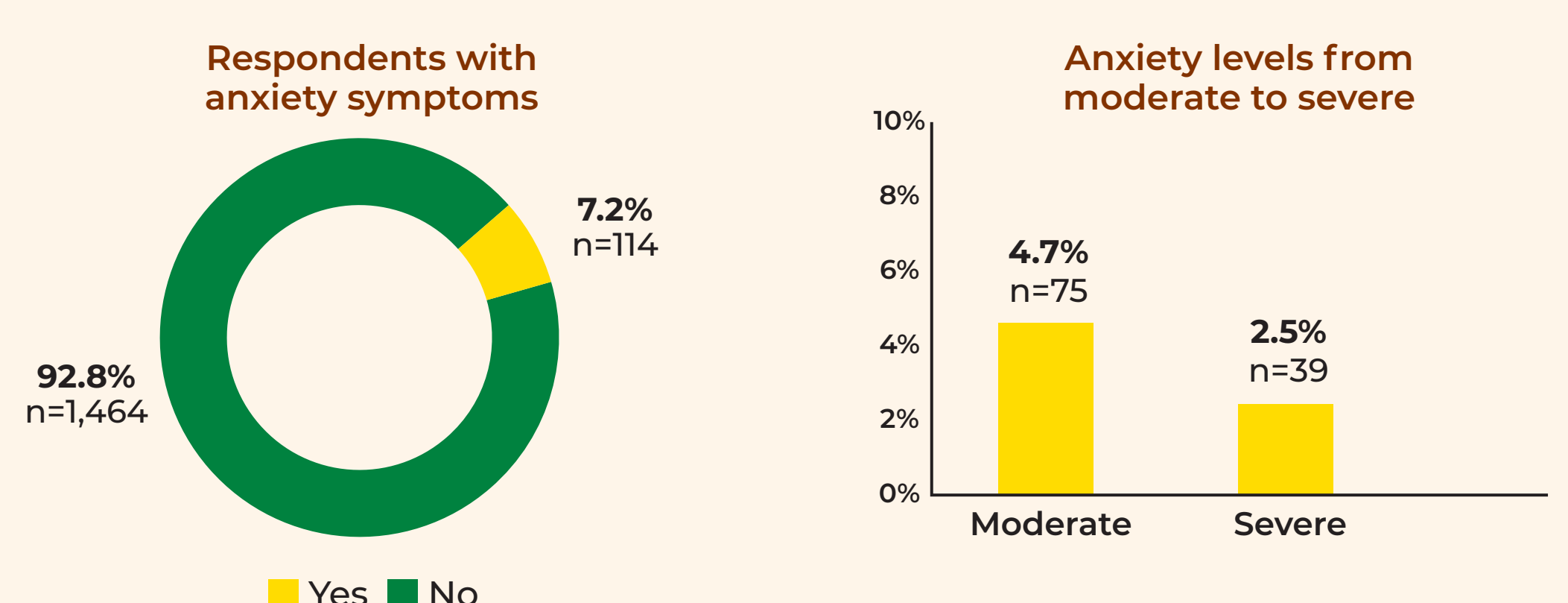
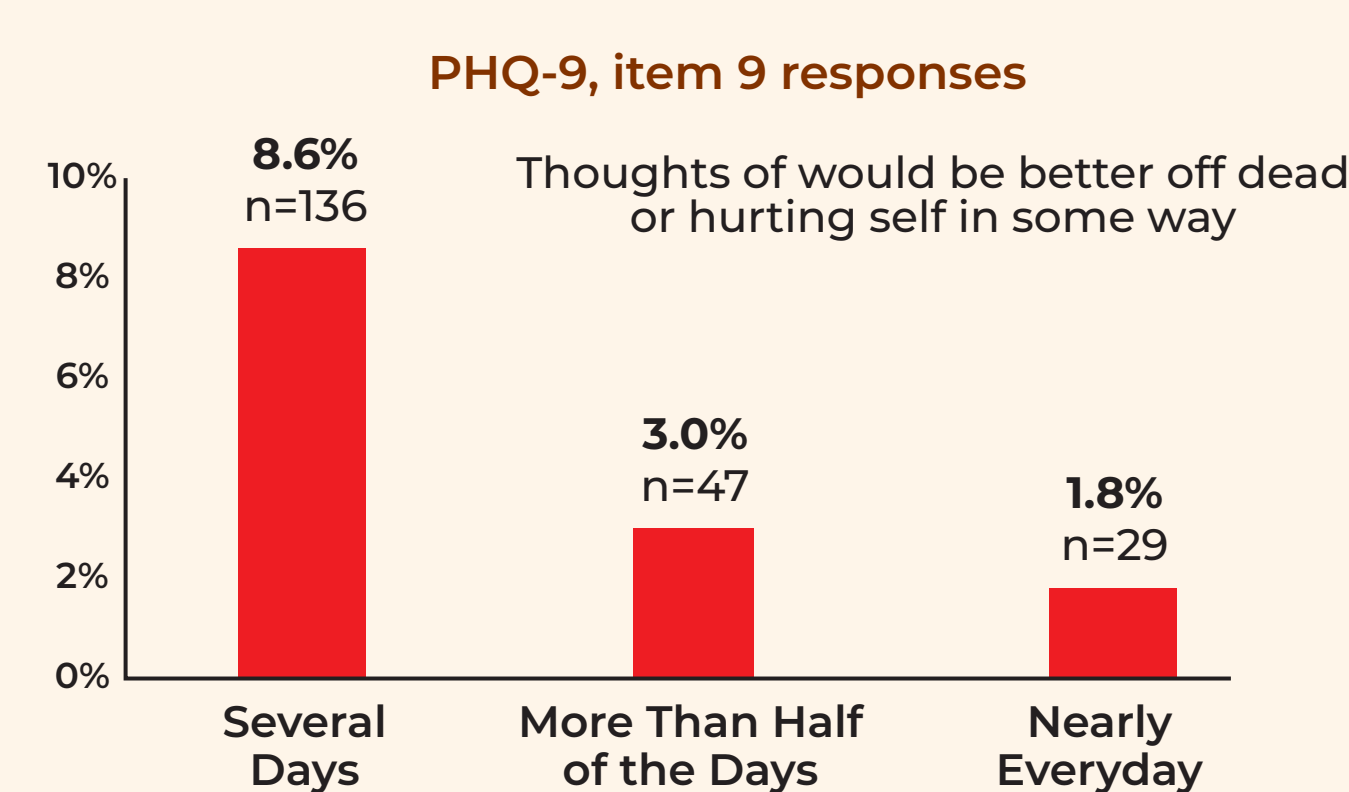


Figure 3. Suicidal And Self-Harm Thoughts

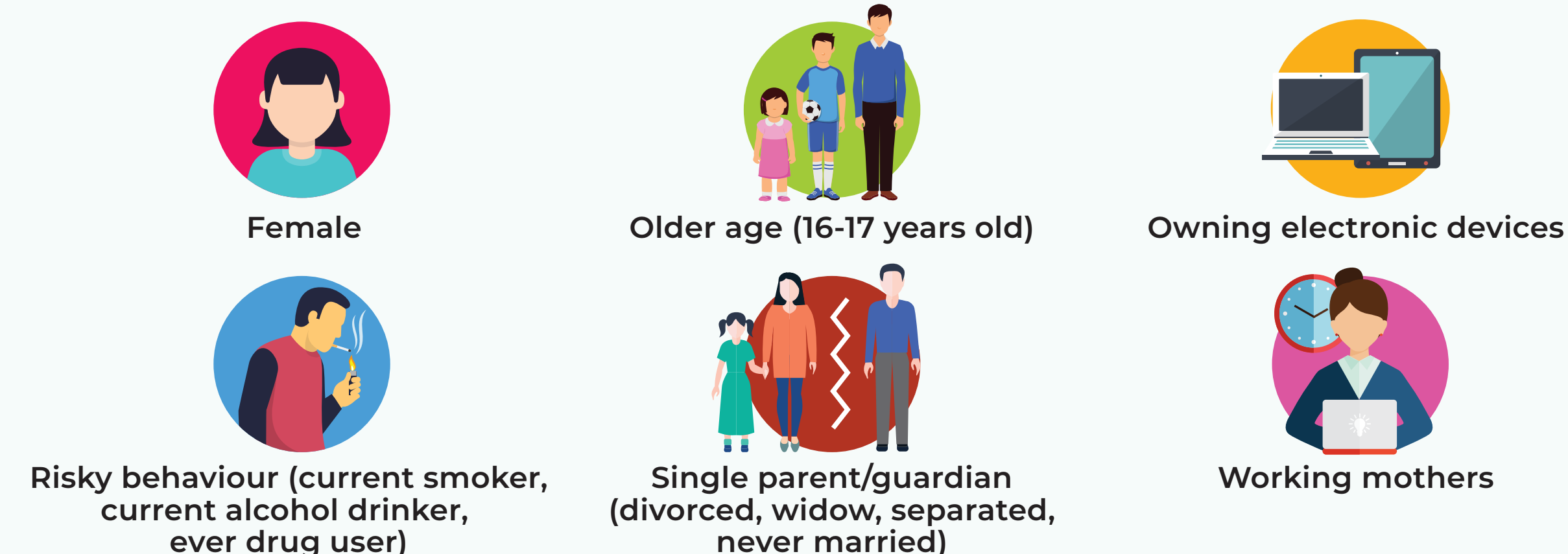
Specific for item 9 of PHQ-9, a total of 8.6% (n=136) had several days of thoughts, 3.0% (n=47) had more than half of the days of thoughts and 1.8% (n=29) had nearly every day of thoughts of better off dead and hurting self in some ways. In total, 212 participants (13.4%) reported suicidal and self-harm thoughts.



### Sociodemographic Factors Associated With Depression And Anxiety Among Respondents

The statistical analysis of the quantitative data shows that:

The following sociodemographic factors are **associated with depression**:



The following sociodemographic factors are **associated with anxiety**:



## CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted lives and livelihoods all over the world and had impacted people's psychological health as well as society as a whole. This study found that the COVID-19 pandemic has a variety of negative psychological effects on adolescents living in Klang Valley PPRs, which are exacerbated by, among others, poor living conditions, family issues and extensive online schooling, etc.

## FUNDING

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