

Program for Advancing Strategic International Networks to Accelerate the Circulation of Talented Researchers Japan-ASEAN Collaboration Research Program on Innovative Humanosphere in Southeast Asia: In search of Wisdom toward Compatibility Growth and Community in the World

## Dispatch Report

Period 1: December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014–February 27, 2015

Period 2: May 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015

Place of fieldwork: Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Thailand

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Collaborators at the host Institution: Assistant Professor Chalernpol Chamchan,  
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### **1.1 Research**

#### **Research background**

Thailand has witnessed over the past decades a significant advances in HIV prevention and treatment as a results of the country's effort to control the epidemic principally among high-risk groups including commercial sex workers (CSWs), men who have sex with men (MSM), and injection drug users (IDUs). However, HIV continues to present a public health threat in Thailand which holds one of the highest adult HIV prevalence in Asia. In addition to CSWs, MSM, and IDUs, the Thai government has identified cross-border migrant worker as an important high-risk group for HIV infection. A number of factors including for instance limited access to health services such as the voluntary Counseling and HIV Testing Services (VCT) may render migrant populations more vulnerable to HIV infection. In the effort to combat HIV/AIDS among migrant workers in Thailand, the Global Funds to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM) has sponsored a project named Prevention of HIV/AIDS among Migrant Workers in Thailand 2 (PHAMIT-2), for which the Raks Thai Foundation is the principal recipient and the Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR) independent evaluator.

#### **Research purpose and aim**

The objective of this research is firstly to identify correlates of VCT uptake among migrant workers from Myanmar in Thailand using a secondary analysis of the baseline survey of PHAMIT-2 conducted by the IPSR.

### **Results and Implication of the study**

Our study revealed that a significantly low proportion of migrant workers from Myanmar had ever tested for HIV. Of the 1,034 participants in the analytic, only 5.3% reported ever had an HIV test. In addition, we identified a number of factors associated with increased likelihood of testing for HIV among migrant workers; these included, having a secondary or higher educational level, being female, knowing someone who died of, working in the fishery sector, and not having a work permit. What emerges from our study is that successful expansion of HIV testing among migrant workers in Thailand will require a thorough consideration of determinants of testing, such as gender differentials in HIV testing, and innovations in how testing is provided, including for example mobile HIV testing outlets at worksite, couple testing during antenatal care, strengthening of the migrant's cultural-sensitive and friendly service provision (of the testing and counseling). Flow of information to migrant workers about place for HIV testing, availability of language assistance, and confidentiality issues was another issue to be addressed.

### **Dissemination of the study**

To ensure the international dissemination of our work, the current study has been submitted at PLOS ONE journal under the title of "Correlates of HIV testing among migrant workers residing in Thailand: a cross-sectional study". Currently, the paper has been accepted for publication minor revision.

### **1.2 Other activities:**

During my stay as a research fellow at the IPSR, Mahidol University, I was involved in a number of activities that were either organized by IPSR or in which IPSR was involved. From the 26-31 January, 2015, I participated, as a rapporteur, at the Prince Mahidol Award Conference, 2015 under the theme "Global Health Post 2015: Accelerating Equity". I also participated at the Thai Research Fund Seminars Series in Basic Research IX: Population and Development in Thailand and Southeast Asian Countries, which took place at IPSR. From July 20-25, 2015, I participated in the Regional Workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation of HIV/AIDS programs which was organized and hosted at the IPSR, Mahidol University.

