

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

Year: August 1st, 2015–January 31st, 2016

Place of fieldwork: Research Institute for Health Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

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1.1 Research

Research background

Young people are a particularly vulnerable population when it comes to HIV infection. There exists strong evidence showing that young Thai engage in behavioral patterns that increase their risk of HIV infection. For example, the Bureau of Epidemiology and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security have reported an increasing trend of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among Thai adolescents over the past 15 years, pointing to an increasing rate of unprotected sex in this population. We identified important gaps in the literature; particularly, there is a scarcity of studies on HIV testing and sexual risk behaviors of Out-of-school young Thai, young people enrolled in non-formal education, and young people in rural areas and young people of ethnic minorities.

Research purpose and aim

The objective of this research was:

- i) To document the prevalence and correlates of HIV testing among out-of-school young

Thai enrolled in non-formal education in Urban Chiang Mai, Thailand.

- ii) To investigate risky sexual behaviors and HIV testing between unmarried out-of-school young Thai and non-Thai in Urban Chiang Mai, Thailand.
- iii) To document risky sexual behaviors of lowland Thai and Ethnic minorities attending high school in Rural Chiang Mai.

Results and Implication of the study

The findings spring from three cross-sectional surveys conducted respectively among out-of-school young Thai enrolled in non-formal education in Urban Chiang Mai, unmarried out-of-school young Thai and non-Thai in Urban Chiang Mai, and lowland Thai and Ethnic minorities attending high school in Rural Chiang Mai. The surveys were conducted by our collaborators team at RIHES.

Result 1: Out-of-school young Thai enrolled in non-formal education:

The finding that a substantially high proportion of young Thai engaged in risky sexual behaviors, yet reported low rates of ever tested for HIV, highlight the urgent need to develop interventions based on the identified correlates of HIV testing, to enhance HIV testing and promote safer sexual behaviors among young Thai people, particularly those who are out-of-school.

Result 2: Out-of-school young Thai and non-Thai in Urban Chiang Mai, Thailand:

Although out-of-school unmarried young Thai had more risky sexual behaviors than the non-Thai, both groups displayed risky behaviors that put them at risk for HIV infections, STIs, and other negative reproductive health outcomes. Future intervention in this population should not only be venue-based, delivered in the NFEC, but should also include community outreach in order to reach out to the maximum possible population of out-of-school in Chiang Mai, and in Thailand.

Result 3: lowland Thai and Ethnic minorities attending high school in Rural Chiang Mai

Risky sexual behaviors were highly prevalent among lowland Thai compared to ethnic minorities; however, both groups remained at large vulnerable to HIV infection and other STIs low prevalence of consistent use of condom. Sex education program in schools that promote safe sex practices and life skills are urgently needed in this particular population of rural Chiang Mai.

Dissemination of the study

Currently, our collaboration with RIHES has produced three scientific papers; of which one is

already submitted to a peer-review journal.

- i) The first paper “Prevalence and correlates of HIV testing among young people enrolled in non-formal education centers in Urban Chiang Mai, Thailand. The paper was submitted at PLOS ONE, and is currently being revised following the first round of revision from the editor and reviewers.
- ii) The second paper “Risky sexual behaviors and HIV testing among unmarried out-of-school Thai and non-Thai youth in Urban Chiang Mai, Thailand”. The paper is expected to be submitted at the Southeast Asian Journal of Tropical Medicine and Public Health.
- iii) The third paper “Sexual behaviors of lowland Thai and Ethnic minorities attending high school in Rural Chiang Mai, Thailand”. The paper will be published to Rural and Remote Health Journal.

1.2 Other activities:

The activities that I have been involved in including the following:

- i) Editing of manuscript of the RIHES team entitled “Sexual risk behaviors for HIV infections among young migrant workers living in Urban Chiang Mai, Thailand”.
- ii) Involvement in research fieldwork: Observation of two program activities of the research project entitled “Prevention of AIDS and unwanted pregnancy among young people attending non-formal education centers in Urban Chiang Mai, Thailand. The first class took place at a non-formal education center located in Chang Phuak District, Chiang Mai. The second program activity took place in a youth-friendly clinic, Health Promotion Hospital, Chiang Mai (Class 2).
- iii) I also attended the RIHE’s monthly physician meeting, and was the guest speaker on the topic “Antiretroviral adherence and food insecurity”.
- iv) Attendance of the Bangkok International Symposium on HIV Medicine, January 13-15, 2016.
- v) Attendance and presentation on Kyoto University School of Public Health during the opening ceremony of Kyoto University Office at Mahidol University on January 11, 2016.



Photo 1: Non Formal Education Center Class of Chiang Phuak District



Photo 2 & 3: Non Formal Education Center Class of Chiang Phuak District
Prevention of AIDS and unwanted pregnancy Project Activity class



Photo 4: Prevention of AIDS and unwanted pregnancy activity class at youth clinic

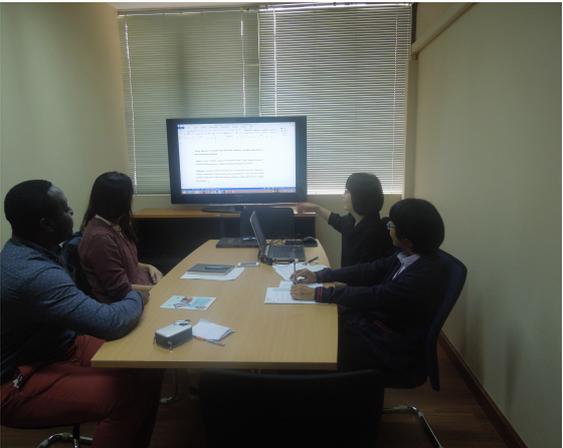


Photo 5: Meeting with RIHES team:
Discussion on interpretation of the result of a prospective paper