

Oral Abstracts

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SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH, KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE AND AWARENESS OF THAI MUSHROOM PICKERS: FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS IN 11 VILLAGES

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Objectives: To demonstrate the social determinants of health, knowledge regarding mushrooms, practice on mushroom picking and awareness concerning mushroom poisoning amongst Thai mushroom pickers.

Methods: Face to face interviews were performed in July 2016 using a structured questionnaire and impromptu note taking by 33 trained interviewers including two authors(TJ, SS). Participants included Thai mushroom pickers 18 years of age or older, who resided in one of three provinces with high incidence of mushroom poisoning.

Results: A total of 440 mushroom pickers from 11 villages were interviewed, of which 236 were from northeast region(AmnatChareon or UbonRajchathani Provinces), and 204 participants were from north region(Nan Province). The mean age was 49.6 years(minimum 18, maximum 85, SD 12.5). The mean duration of mushroom picking experience was 26.4 years(minimum 1, maximum 70, SD 15.7). The majority of participants were female(84.8%), completed elementary school(51.4%), did agricultural work(75.9%) and had low income(88.6%). Some 50 percent of participants indicated that selling wild mushrooms contributed significantly to their household income. Seeking medical attention was a significant burden for 40 participants, given the cost of transportation and missed opportunity to work. Some 378 participants(85.9%) were confident that they could correctly distinguish edible from poisonous mushrooms, however 40 participants responded incorrectly when presented with pictures of *A.princeps* and *A.virosa* during the interview. The incorrect identification of mushrooms from the provided pictures was not associated with their prior experiences of falling ill following mushroom ingestion(OR:0.87, 95%CI:0.26-2.98). Some 390 participants(88.6%) indicated that mushroom poisoning was an important public health problem in Thailand. Some 426 participants(96.8%) had heard about deaths from mushroom ingestions and public warnings, however 290 participants(66 %) indicated that the news and public warnings had no influence on their attitudes concerning picking mushroom, as they were confident in their abilities. Participants suggested the following strategies; mushroom pickers should pick only obvious edible mushrooms and avoid suspicious types; public healthpersonnels should provide posters showing edible and poisonous mushrooms. These should be made widely available and come with a public warning; the government should improve the quality of medical care, enhance the antidote stockpile, and support research into mushroom poisoning.

Conclusion: This study confirms that mushroom pickers have inferior social determinants of health, carry varying levels of incorrect knowledge and practices regarding mushrooms, but are aware of mushroom poisoning as an important public health problem. Prevention and intervention of mushroom poisoning should be performed at individual, community and national levels.