

Elimination of liver fluke (opisthorchiasis) and bile duct cancer (cholangiocarcinoma) in people

The 7th National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on Elimination of liver fluke (opisthorchiasis) and bile duct cancer (cholangiocarcinoma) in people

Realizing that the elimination of liver fluke and bile duct cancer in people is useful to reduce the incidence and mortality caused by bile duct cancer, that the disease can be prevented and cured if the early symptoms are found on condition that the action taken must be integrated and cover all risk factors concerned, behavioral, environmental and cultural, that efforts must be made to prevent every water source from being contaminated by fecal matter to ensure that fish are free from *Opisthorchis viverrini*, to instill appropriate cultural value in people of all sexes and age groups to eat cooked fish, to screen risk groups, to modify risk behaviors in people with liver fluke, and to put in place a monitoring system for the purpose of disease prevention and control using the community and school as a base, and that it is essential to mobilize the energy of the public, private and civil society sectors in the strengthening of the healthcare process ranging from screening to treatment, of community care and of the health system as a whole,

Concerned and worried that so far the actions undertaken to resolve the issue has not been continuous or vigorous enough and found lacking in cooperation from the public sector and partner networks, lacking in unity regarding the design of work systems, lacking in clarity of policy-oriented directions, while the health system and health information system are not developed to their potentials and that, significantly, the public still lack awareness of safe consumption behaviors, viewing that if the issue is made into a national agenda it will be possible to eliminate liver fluke infection within 10 years and the mortality rate from bile duct cancer will be reduced by more than half in 20 years' time when it will no longer be an important public health issue,

Appreciating that the Ministry of Public Health, National Health Security Office, Ministry of Education, institutes of higher education, foundations, non-government organizations and agencies concerned have taken action to control the problem of liver fluke and bile duct cancer seriously and continuously but that there is more room for further development,

Has, therefore, passed the following resolutions:

1. Request the Ministry of Public Health through Department of Disease Control, Department of Medical Services, Department of Health, Department of Health Service Support, Department for Development of Thai and Alternative Medicine, Office of Permanent Secretary for Public Health, and Food and Drug Administration, as the lead agency, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives through Department of Livestock Development and Department of Fisheries, networks of local government organizations, National Health Security Office (NHSO), academic agencies, and organizations concerned from the public, people and private sectors to join forces in developing and

completing a strategic plan of the Decade for the Elimination of liver fluke and bile duct cancer within three months before submitting it to the cabinet.

2. In order to ensure effective development of the strategic plan above, requesting various agencies within the Ministry of Public Health to take action as follows:

2.1 Department of Disease Control through Bureau of General Communicable Disease to act as the lead agency in driving forward the strategic plan of the Decade for the Elimination of liver fluke and bile duct cancer, generating knowledge, putting in place a disease monitoring system, conducting screening tests, providing technical support for disease prevention and control, and following up the progress in light of the strategic plan together with partner networks from the public and civil society sectors.

2.2 Department of Medical Services through National Cancer Institute to develop a bile duct cancer registration system, train personnel, and advocate putting in place the screening, diagnosis and treatment of patients with bile duct cancer at the initial stage.

2.3 Department of Health Service Support to develop village health volunteers (VHV) in Tambon (sub-districts) charged with health management and make them into community health management specialists equipped with knowledge of disease prevention, to inculcate good hygiene habits, working with community leaders in launching campaigns aimed to promote appropriate consumption behaviors, and to act as role models, designed to lead to disease prevention and control in the locality.

2.4 Office of Permanent Secretary for Public Health to develop networks of service units responsible for diagnosis, screening, and treatment of bile duct cancer in a comprehensive and efficient manner, to equip them with personnel skilled in disease prevention and control able to use appropriate technology in screening and monitoring risk groups, to put in place an efficient consultancy system by local medical specialists, to arrange for surgeons to receive further training to ensure more efficient patient care at the hospital at the Center and other general hospitals in provinces facing the problem, and to ensure public access to health services for treatment in the locality without financial burden on the patients concerned and their family.

2.5 Department for Development of Thai and Alternative Medicine, together with Sakon Nakhon Hospital for Combined Cancer Treatment by Thai and Alternative Medicine, Arokhayasan Holistic Treatment Center at Wat Kham Pramong and other Thai and alternative medical clinics, as the lead agency working with partner networks and volunteer organizations involved in the palliative care of patients with bile duct cancer and using Thai herb and Thai traditional medical wisdom together with other holistic methods to develop the quality of life of patients and their family.

2.6 Department of Health, Food and Drug Administration, Office of the Consumer Protection Board and partner networks concerned to equip restaurant/local food product operators with a better knowledge and greater awareness of the importance of good hygienic practice and ask them to refrain from selling raw fish dishes (scaled fresh-water fishes) to prevent *Opisthorchis viverrini* contamination in the food as well as to support and promote local authorities to come up with regulations or social measures to eliminate waste and sewage in a hygienic and environmentally friendly manner in the locality.

3. Request the local offices of the National Health Security Office (NHSO) to attach more importance to the issue and to provide budgetary support to the public and private sectors in carry out activities to prevent, control and solve problems of liver fluke

and bile duct cancer in risk areas as well as continuous monitoring, involving, in particular, the participatory process by the people sector.

4. Request the Department of Local Administration to coordinate with local government organizations and civil society sector in each locality in supporting and promoting local authorities to come up with regulations or social measures on hygienic elimination of waste and sewage, on maintenance of public cleanliness, on the creation of a local environment-monitoring system, and on the solution of local liver fluke and bile duct cancer problems in light of the capacity and financial standing of each local government organization.

5. Request the Ministry of Education to take action as follows:

5.1 Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC) together with agencies concerned to develop study plans for schools in line with the local contexts to prepare pre-primary students, schoolchildren and teenagers to know, understand, realize, and adopt safe food eating habits and not to eat risk and uncooked food.

5.2 Office of Non-formal and Informal Education (NFE), institutes of higher education, vocational education institutions, and community colleges to organize the learning process in line with local texts to enable students and the general public to understand, realize, and adopt the value and habit of not eating uncooked food.

6. Request the Ministry of Transport to come up with efficient measures designed to manage waste and sewage in land and water transportation systems, especially railroads, city buses and ferries.

7. Request institutes of higher education, together with Department of Livestock Development, Department of Fisheries, Department of Disease Control, Department for Development of Thai and Alternative Medicine, Thailand Research Fund (TRF), local government organizations, and Health Systems Research Institute, to cooperate in conducting studies relating to social, behavioral and ecological aspects as well as morbidity and treatment and to obtain knowledge leading to the elimination of the problem, as well as encouraging further application of research findings to the formulation of the policy and social and local measures.

8. Request the Department of Public Relations and Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), together with the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Interior, and Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth), to support social drives and public media working with other organizations to promote public understanding and awareness of risk conditions, protection of self against liver fluke and bile duct cancer and to create the process of community and social participation.

9. Request members of the National Health Assembly, together with partner networks concerned, to support the organization of area-based health assemblies, to promote and to monitor their work and implementation in their areas.

10. Request the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to make a progress report to the 8th National Health Assembly.