

The Goals of Preventing and Controlling Non-Communicable Disease in Thailand

Definition

Non-communicable diseases, NCD, refer to a group of diseases that result from malfunction or deterioration of the body and which are not contagious to others. These diseases are the leading cause of chronic illness.

"Non-communicable diseases" in this document are limited to four disease groups: 1) cardiovascular diseases (e.g., myocardial infarction, hypertension, ischemic or hemorrhagic stroke and related diseases as a result of obstructed or broken blood vessels), 2) diabetes and obesity, 3) cancer, and 4) chronic lung diseases (including emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and asthma). These 4 groups are the most worrisome of non-communicable diseases and mostly share the same risk factors, including inappropriate behaviors such as eating unhealthy foods, smoking, drinking, and inadequate physical activity, together with physical and social environmental risk factors.

Additional Explanation

The term "non-communicable diseases" occurs later after being separated from communicable diseases that are caused by germs, can be contagious and cause outbreaks such as measles, cholera, etc. In the past, communicable diseases presented more important health problems because they were the main cause of premature death. However, infectious disease prevention and control have become more effective, while non-communicable disease occurrence has increased and have caused more premature deaths, which have mostly resulted from human behavioral and environmental changes.

The term "non-communicable diseases (NCD) has been increasingly used for the international cooperation to prevent and control the diseases since 2000, after the Health for All by the Year 2000 policy that mainly deals with infectious disease control. The international cooperation committees have planned together for Health for All in the 21st Century, which focuses on non-communicable disease control, replacing important health problems associated

with communicable diseases. Despite this, at present, evidence reveals that some non-communicable diseases result from infection.

Significance of the Problems

1. Non-communicable diseases are the major causes of premature death of the world and Thai population at present. It tends to increase steadily as the leading cause of premature death (before 70 years old) up to 63 percent of all deaths in the world (WHO, 2011) and 73 percent of premature deaths of Thai people (2012). It is predicted that the deaths from non-communicable diseases of the world population will increase from 36 million people in 2008 to 44 million people in the year 2020. Additionally, there is the health burden of illness and disability.

2. The number of patients with non-communicable diseases in Thailand has been rapidly increasing. From the database of hospitalized patients in the public hospitals of the Ministry of Public Health (National Health Security Office, 2009) in five years during 2005 to 2009 (National Health Security Office, 2009), the number of patients with ischemic heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, cancer, and emphysema increased 4.2, 7.1, 3.9, 4.8, 1.2, and 1.23 times, respectively.

3. A large number of Thai people are sick from non-communicable diseases and still live with risk behaviors. Data from the survey of Thai people aged 15 years and over in 2011 showed that 21.4 percent of Thai adults have high blood pressure, 6.9 percent have diabetes, 40.4 and 28.4 percent of female and male respectively are either overweight or obese. A large number of Thai people have high risk behaviors related to these diseases. For example, only 37.5 percent of Thai people have sufficient levels of physical activity and only 79.5 percent of the Thai males and 75.5 percent of Thai females consume adequate fruit and vegetables, while about 31.5 percent of Thai people still drink alcoholic beverages and 21.4 percent of them consume tobacco. Besides, the number of Thai people with risk behaviors has tended to increase. For instance, during the 17 years between 1992 and 2009, the number of overweight and obese Thais increased 4-fold for males and 2.6-fold for females.

4. Non-communicable diseases are still the significant threat to economic and social development because of their impacts on the quality of Thai population, economic losses from premature deaths, and health costs burden, consequently resulting in poverty at the individual, household, and overall

society level. Thailand spent more than 1.4 million baht in the year 2009 for the cost of treating patients with four main diseases for (Bundhamcharoen & et al., 2012) and the costs to society from major risk factors in drinking alcohol, smoking, obesity, and lacking of physical activity were 156105, 34183, 12142 and 5977 million baht respectively.

International situation and tendency in controlling diseases

5. For the international situation in preventing and controlling non-communicable disease, the World Health Organization, with the collaboration of member countries, including Thailand, had moved the process of preventing and controlling non-communicable disease continuously by organizing meetings and developing strategies In 2000, the global strategy for preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases was certified following with "Global Action Plan for NCD Prevention and Control, 2013-2020". Moreover, policies and practice guidelines in managing the main risk factors such as tobacco, alcohol, food, and lack of physical activity were developed together.

6. The international goals in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases were developed from WHO information which indicated that most burden from non-communicable diseases result from 1) "4" major disease groups are cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic lung diseases, which covers 85 percent of total deaths from non-communicable diseases, 2) "4" significant changes are hypertension, overweight and obesity, hyperglycemia, and hypercholesterolemia, and 3) "4" behavioral risk factors are smoking, alcohol consumption, improper dietary habits, and inadequate physical activity. The management of these 12 important causes (also called "Managing a 4 x 4 x 4") is the "heart" in preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases and expected to be able to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases by up to 80 percent. However, this does not mean that other groups of diseases and risk factors will be ignored.

7. In 2011, the World Health Organization¹ recommended members to give precedence to 26 effective and high cost effective measures to prevent and control non-communicable diseases, so that the members considered using them to serve as guidelines for designing policies to deal with the risk factors by dividing them into 2 groups of measures. The first one is the most important one

¹ Global Status Report on Non-communicable Diseases 2010, the World Health Organization

and bears the greatest cost effectiveness (Best Buys) which should be implemented first. The second one should be implemented later and is referred to as Good Buys. These actions will be done at the population level, such as taxes and goods price, goods access, marketing and advertising activities, education and public campaigns, workplace or establishment activities, and related health care system management. This does not mean the non-communicable disease management at the individual level is not important but the individual-level measures are likely to be less effective and less cost effectiveness-.

Best buys	Good buys
1) Protecting non-smokers' health from tobacco smoke	1) Increasing access to smoking cessation
2) Providing information of tobacco harm	2) Controlling driving behaviour after drinking
3) Prohibiting advertisement and sale promotion in cigarette business	3) Screening and short course therapy
4) Increasing tobacco taxes	4) Controlling food and beverage marketing to children
5) Controlling physical access to alcohol	5) Reducing saturated fat consumption
6) Controlling advertisement on alcoholic beverage	6) Taxation and food pricing
7) Taxation and alcoholic beverage pricing	7) Providing counseling service in primary healthcare system
8) Reducing salt consumption	8) Health educating about consuming behaviour in the workplace
9) Reducing trans fats consumption	9) Promoting good consuming behaviour in school
10) Campaigning good consuming behaviors to the public	10) Promoting physical activity in the community
11) Campaigning physical activity to the public	11) Promoting physical activity through transportation
12) Preventing liver cancer by hepatitis B vaccination	12) Promoting physical activity through primary healthcare system
	13) Promoting physical activity in the

	workplace
	14) Promoting physical activity in school

8. In the conference of the UN General Assembly on the issue of preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases in September 2011, the leaders of every country around the world (Presidents and Prime Ministers), including the leader from Thailand, joined the meeting and decided the resolution with commitment to the intention that: "**The non-communicable disease management requires the cooperation of all sectors**", cannot be handled by the health sector alone, and should focus on the integration of health services into social and economic development policy and plans at all levels (Health in all policies), and must be aware of conflict of interest of those involved in the management of chronic non-communicable diseases and their risk factors

9. In that conference, the World Health Organization, in collaboration with the members, were assigned to develop **the global monitoring framework for NCD including Indicator and voluntary targets**, which was completed and certified by the World Health Assembly and UN General Assembly in 2013. This was the results of the academic collaboration between WHO and members by considering both feasibility and consistency and setting voluntary targets by members to certify and / or improve them to suit the context of their own country. Some targets allow opportunity to members to choose the key indicators appropriate to the context and availability of the nation itself.

10. The framework of indicators and targets, as noted earlier, consists of **indicators of 9 global goals** that are set to be achieved by the year 2025, starting from the year 2010, and divided into three categories, including 1) one ultimate goal, which is to reduce mortality and morbidity rate, 2) the goals of managing six risk factors, and 3) two goals of managing the national service system (see TNHA 6/Resolution 6/Appendix 1).

11. In the South East Asia, there is a movement that is consistent with such world-class development, such as the South-East Asia Regional Action Plan for NCD Prevention and Control 2013-2020 which has endorsed the "9 global goals" and adds one more goal of the region; that is the target of reducing household air pollution (indoor air pollution).

Policies, measures and related implementation in Thailand.

12. The implementation of non-communicable disease prevention and control at the national level in Thailand includes movement within the health system and the continuing efforts to raise the priority of non-communicable disease problems across a wider range than covered by health policies, such as giving precedence to non-communicable diseases in the Statute on the National Health System 2009 (Chapter 5 Prevention and Control of diseases and health-threatening factors), in the Tenth and the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan, in the Thai healthy lifestyle strategic plans 2011-2020, in the health system developmental plans 2013-2017 and the movement in the mechanism of the Thai National Health Assembly consisting of the strategic development to manage risk factors that are certified by the National Health Assembly, including the strategy of overweight and obesity management (Health Assembly 2, Resolution 8), strategy of the national alcohol policy (Health Assembly 2, resolution 5), the national tobacco control strategy 2012-2014 (Health Assembly 3, Resolution 6) as well as the strategic framework on national food management 2012-2016 by the National Food Committee. There are multiple agencies involved from the public sectors of the Ministry of Public Health and independent agencies to conduct health promotion such as Thai Health Promotion Foundation and Collaborative networks from many sectors, such as the non-communicable diseases network (NCD Network) or people sectors network who work to specifically control risk factors such as Thai Sweet Enough Network, Stop Drink Network, Raipoong networks, and the network for reducing salt consumption.

13. From a review of the working group by the coordination of the NCD Network, the results show that Thailand is well equipped to monitor progress in achieving the "Nine global goals" for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, at an adequate level, by having the database to keep track of diseases and various risk factors, such as death registration data by the Bureau of Policy and Strategy, Thai health survey, the surveillance of risk behaviors of non-communicable diseases and injury, and smoking and alcohol consumption behavior surveys by the National Statistical Office. However, there is a need to develop the reporting and surveillance system to be more integrated. In addition, the working group had selected the indicators of the targets which will be consistent with the Thai context (See TNHA 6 /Resolution 6 / Appendix 1).

The limitation of the implementation and the guideline to solve the problem

14. Although Thailand has the strategic and action plans to deal with non-communicable diseases and risk factors by operating through various agencies and multi-networks, it is found that many operations may not be in the same direction, lacking a common set goal, lacking good monitoring and driving system and the policy implementation is not strong enough.

15. It is well known that the management of preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases and main risk factors needs to rely on the collaboration of many sectors. However, the implementation to prevent and control non-communicable diseases is mostly limited to the health sector and the public sector. In addition, the operation is clear only at the national level, and still lacks participation from many sectors, such as civil society, the private sector, and the local sector. There should be a mechanism and process to develop the capacity of relevant agencies in managing non-communicable diseases at both the international and local level.

16. The international movement, especially certifying "9 global goals" of preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases, is an opportunity to strengthen the management of non-communicable diseases and their risk factors in Thailand. In order to be more efficient and more productive, the following guidelines can be used:

16.1 Strategy development, including the goals of prevention and control of non-communicable diseases at the national level, should be consistent with the strategy and action plans including the indicator framework and goals of prevention and control of non-communicable diseases at the global and regional level with collaboration from all sectors.

16.2 Develops the monitoring, surveillance and reporting systems for preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases, and also develops the data sources, responsible agencies, and the time frame for evaluation.

16.3 Develops a mechanism at national and local levels that focuses on the participation of all sectors in preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases and risk factors, starting from policy development, target determination at both national and local levels, policy implementation, together with monitoring and evaluation to achieve the national goal by efficiently utilizing resources, and further investing if necessary, as well as developing competencies of those involved.

Issue for Consideration by National Health Assembly

Request the National Health Assembly to consider the Health Assembly 6/Draft Resolution 6 the goals of preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases in Thailand.

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