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# Self-reporting of illness and accidents among sugarcane farmers in Northeastern Thailand

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## Background

Using their life for money

“I use my bear hands to stir chemical pesticides when I mix them” (a farmer)



★ Number of workers in Thailand 38.7 million

Informal workers= 24.1 million

14.5 million farmers others 9.6 million

600,000 sugarcane growers



improper  
self-care



→ work with poor posture

→ Do not protect themselves  
during use of chemical  
pesticides or herbicides

→ Do not wear mask to protect  
themselves from dust



## Illness

### **Informal sector workers**

- low back pain, shoulder pain etc**
- skin rash from chemical allergy**
- coughs etc**







## Objective

- identify self-care practice among sugarcane growers
- identify self-reporting of illness and accidents among sugarcane growers





# Research Design

Setting for study:  
Three Provinces in  
Northeastern Part





## **Preliminary phase of action research**

**Participants: - purposive sampling**

**- 88 sugarcane growers**

**Data collection:**

- focus groups, participant observation  
and field notes**
- self-evaluation of illness diaries**





## Data Analysis

- content analysis
- descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation



## Results

## Demographic data



Demographic data	Number	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
- Male	63	71.6
- Female	25	28.4
<b>Age(years)</b>		
- 25-34	13	14.8
- 35-44	32	36.4
- 45-54	27	30.7
- ≥55	16	18.2
Mean=45.15 , SD=9.76		
<b>Formally education level</b>		
- Primary school	65	73.9
- Secondary school	13	14.7
- College	10	11.4
<b>Marital status</b>		
- Single	2	2.3
- Marriage	85	96.6
- Separate	1	1.1
<b>Income(AUD)</b>		
- ≤ 150	43	48.9
- 151- 300	41	46.6
- ≥ 301	4	4.5
(1AUD= 33.5 baht)		
Mean= 159.00, SD=100.40		



## ★ Improper self-care -work with poor posture





**“I bend my body when I lift heavy thing since I feel familiar with it and I do not know that it is harmful for my back” (FG)**





- using chemical pesticide without protection







**“I do not wear gloves when I mix chemical pesticide since I feel uncomfortable and I work awkwardly. This make me work very slowly and I can not finish my job on time”**

**“I often used my mouth to blow obstructions from the chemical pesticide tank nozzle”**





- working in dusty environment without wearing a mask





**“ When I wore a mask, I could not breath comfortably because of hot weather and I sweat, then my mask was wet. After that I had never wore it” (FG)**



## Self-reported illness

Illness	Number	Percent
<b>Musculoskeletal problems</b>		
- low back pain	46	40.5
- shoulder pain	22	19.4
- arm pain	22	19.1
<b>Respiratory problems</b>		
- coughs	19	21.3
- throat irritation	20	22.5
- asthma	17	19.1
<b>Illness related to chemical</b>		
- skin rash	10	11.2
- finger nails necrosis and loss	2	2.2
- dizziness	28	31.5
<b>Accidents</b>		
- cuts to their legs and arms	12	13.5
- wood stick stabbing their poorly protected feet	11	12.4
- - Falls	10	11.2



## Conclusion

**Community nurses and health personnel are able to use these results to care for sugarcane farmers by encouraging them in preventative health measures to better protect themselves against work related illnesses and injuries. The results of this study will be also used as basic information to develop a model for primary care unit to promote better health among sugarcane farmers.**



**Thank you very much for your kind  
attention**



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