

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF SUPHANBURI VILLAGERS REGARDING AVIAN INFLUENZA

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The objective of this cross-sectional descriptive study was to evaluate knowledge and practice of villagers in Suphanburi Province in case of new outbreaks of avian influenza (AI). The total sample size was 203 out of 432 households. Using a structured self-report questionnaire, one adult per household older than 17 years was interviewed. All respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire with only one answer of choice. The study also described socio-demographic characteristic and the source of information on AI. The response rate was 89% (180/203). Three main sources of avian influenza information were TV broadcasts 97%, radio 65%, newspapers 63%. The majority of respondents (72%) were visited by village health volunteers and received information regarding AI. About 68% of the respondents had moderate knowledge about symptoms of sick birds; 58% had moderate knowledge regarding AI transmission and less than 49% had moderate practice level. There was highly significant association between knowledge and practice ($p < 0.001$). Practice score was positive significant correlated with score for transmission knowledge ($p < 0.004$). Almost 85% of all respondents absolutely agreed/agreed that AI could be fatal. However more than half of the respondents (56%) agreed/absolutely agreed that AI was not a danger as

it was declared in a media. The results of this study showed that respondents with children had significant high scores ($p < 0.013$) of awareness regarding avian influenza. There was a significant difference between the knowledge of respondents with primary school education and respondents who had never attended school ($p < 0.047$). The affected poultry farmers had significant higher scores ($p < 0.004$) of knowledge than the other respondents who did not.

In conclusions, most villagers had moderate knowledge about avian flu and they understood that avian flu could be a cause of death, but they were not fully aware of its dangers. The government has carried out a massive campaign to explain the danger and to make people aware of AI but the outcome has not had expected impact.

The knowledge of respondents does not relate directly to their practices in relation to disease prevention. The finding result indicated that the continuing campaigns are needed to explain more about AI and about safety practice.

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