

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF ANTIBIOTIC USE FOR TREATING UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS

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Efforts to Promote Rational Antibiotic Use in Thailand

The promotion of the rational use of antibiotics in Thailand has been in operation for many years. The aim is to reduce the excessive use of antibiotics in both healthcare facilities and the general public. The use of antibiotics for upper respiratory tract infections is one of the main target areas of the campaign in Thailand. The government has been working to educate the public about the appropriate use of antibiotics for these infectious diseases.

Consequences of Antibiotic Overuse

Overuse of antibiotics not only elevates treatment costs but also contributes to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, which can lead to severe health complications and even death.

Survey Results Indicate Issues with People's Knowledge about Antibiotics

- Most people have used antibiotics, often for treating a sore throat.
- Over 70% do not know antibiotics are effective only against bacteria and have no effect on viruses.
- Many are unaware that antibiotics cannot shorten the duration of a cold.
- About half of respondents do not know antibiotics cannot prevent colds and that overuse can lead to drug-resistant bacteria.
- People aged 40-60 with a bachelor's degree or higher, and those who have received information about antibiotics, have correct knowledge 2-3 times higher than other groups.

Correct Understanding of Antibiotic Use

- Upper respiratory tract infections are usually caused by viruses.
- Antibiotics are effective only against bacterial infections.
- Generally, antibiotics are not needed for treating upper respiratory tract infections like the common cold or acute strep throat.
- Frequent, unnecessary use of antibiotics or stopping treatment early can lead to bacteria mutating and becoming drug-resistant.
- Drug-resistant bacteria can cause future complications.

Conclusion from the Survey

The public still lacks proper knowledge and understanding about the use of antibiotics for upper respiratory tract infections. Continuously promoting correct information to the public remains necessary, along with developing strategies to ensure that all groups of citizens have access to this information.