

Information and statistics on supply and demand of substance abuse in Thailand : A review on where to fine what and potential for development

Vichai Poshyachinda and Usaney Pongparn

Institute of Health Research, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

ABSTRACT

Thailand has many archives of information and statistics (I&S) on substance abuse supply and demand. Before 1959, the records dealt with opium almost exclusively. Between 1959-76, the substance abuse pattern changed drastically by the appearance of two heroin epidemics and increased in abuse of many other substances. The Government declared substance abuse as the priority national problem in 1976 and established the Office of Narcotics Control Board to responsible for the policy, planning and coordination. The Office became the first central archie of substance abuse I&S. The strong recognition of the administration form thereon led to a new phase of I&S development. Although the intervention records continue to be a major source, new type of I&S appeared. Large population survey and new substance abuse monitoring information system were established. Overall, the information system gradually improved in technical spohitication as well as the extent and qulality of the I&S. However, the utilization of I&S had been limit in comparison to the level of availability at any point in time. The reasons of which probably due to the inadequacy of the I&S processing and presentation in conjunction with the lack of good interpretation and direct application in policy formulation and planning. Further development of the information system seems feasible with good prospect of increase cost effectiveness as well. Long term planning in particular the development of quality manpower, effective management and application of appropriated technology are critical for future success and sustainability.

Key words : HIV, Diagnosis, Patients

The regional office of the United Nations Drug Control Programme, Bangkok, Thailand. May 1996