

## Consumer's Opinions on Reading a Medicine Leaflet

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### ABSTRACT

*It is generally evident that reading a medicine leaflet can provide several improvements of medication for consumers. However, most consumers seldom perform this reading behaviour. The objective of this study was to identify factors associated with the reading behaviour from consumer's opinions. This cross-sectional study was conducted in 2003 at Chiang Mai, Thailand. A sample (n = 384) was selected by systematic random sampling from freshman students (N about 4,000) of a university in the city. The study used an open-ended questionnaire, asking the reasons for reading or not reading a medicine leaflet and comments on it. This investigation used content analysis and factor analysis to analyze the data. Factors identified were as follow. Four categories of reasons for reading contained: (1) to administer a medicine, (2) to prevent undesirable effect, (3) to know a medicine and (4) to concern medication. Similarly, four categories of reasons for not reading consisted of: (1) difficult content, (2) previous experiences, (3) small print and (4) ignorance. For comments on a medicine leaflet, there were also four categories that were: (1) difficult content, (2) dual ideas, (3) small print and (4) satisfaction. Difficult content and small print of a medicine leaflet were found to be the main shortcomings, precluding consumers from reading it. Therefore, it was necessary to improve such shortcomings in order to enable consumers to read a medicine leaflet. The study also discussed and suggested how to improve a medicine leaflet.*

**Key words:** Consumer's opinions, A medicine leaflet, Reading a medicine leaflet

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

In Thailand, there is an increase of medication and there are still problems of medication (The Ninth Health Plan, 2001). A problem is that consumers have little information about a medicine they take. Thus, it is necessary to facilitate consumer to have more information when medicating. According to the Drug Act B.E. 2510, medicine manufacturers have to provide a medicine label and leaflet with a medicine package. Hence, a leaflet is an official written source of medicine information that consumers can get the advantage from it for appropriate medication. The Thai Food and Drug Administration (TFDA) has recommended that every consumer read a label and a leaflet when he purchases or takes a medicine. In addition, it is evident that reading a leaflet can provide several improvements of medication for consumers. Such improvements are increasing compliance, increasing awareness of possible adverse actions, improving knowledge of medicine instruction and