

## Screening for Undeclared Synthetic Drugs in Traditional Thai Medicines for Healthy Life Style

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### ABSTRACT

*This research aims to study the adulteration of synthetic drugs in traditional Thai medicines (TTM) that may affects the consumers' quality of life. The study focuses on the population of various occupations, ages, genders and levels of education in Chiang Mai and other provinces. Data were collected from sampling group of 700 people between March-April 2003. Questionnaires were employed using random sampling method in order to gather information on health and the strategy of health maintenance, using TTM as well as the sampling of commercially-available TTM, to investigate the adulteration of synthetic drug(s), if any, in the TTM.*

*The results showed that 39.1% of the population chose to use TTM, based on the information told by others, while 55.0% of the population confirmed that medicinal -plant drugs could indeed alleviate the illnesses. However, 43.0% of the population believed that the over-consumption of TTM might harm the consumers. The adulterated/contaminated substances most feared by the population were fungi (40.9%) and chemicals/heavy metals (34.4% ), and 37.7% of the population believed that these substances could affect kidneys most. As for the opinion on the development and improvement of TTM, 78.6% of the population believed that the approval by western medicine was the most important issue, while 18.4% commented that the improvement of product appearance was also significant. The analysis for adulterated synthetic drugs in TTM, using thin-layer chromatography, showed no prednisolone, dexamethasone, indomethacin, aspirin, acetaminophen or phenylbutazone in 17 products. Only one product was found to contain acetaminophen.*

*There were uncontrollable factors in this research, including the inaccurate and incomplete data from some of the questionnaires which was due to the fact that the population might not have enough understanding on the use of TTM and adulteration in TTM.*

**Key words:** Undeclared synthetic drugs, Traditional Thai Medicines (TTM)