

Recent Activities about Cancer Control Programme in Thailand and Relations with Asia

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During the last 20 years, the leading cause of death in Thailand has changed from infection diseases to non-communicable diseases. These comprise diseases of coronary and heart, malignant neoplasms, and accident. Since the year 2000, cancer is the first leading cause of death in our country.

National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) in Thailand has been developed in 1998 for four common cancers in Thailand: liver, lung, cervix and breast cancer. Priority actions for NCCP, according to medium level of resources are as follows:

Cancer Informatics

The cancer registry is an essential part of any national programme for cancer control. In Thailand, a population-based nationwide cancer registry was established in 1988, currently nine population-based cancer registries have participated in the programme. We also realize the importance of having an international network of cancer registry since our institute is the member of Asian cooperation for cancer prevention. We also contribute to the promotion of population-based cancer registration in Indonesia and Bhutan.

Primary Prevention

Prevention means minimizing or eliminating exposure to carcinogenic agents, as well as reducing individual susceptibility to the effect of such agents. The activities that are being promoted focus on tobacco control, reducing alcohol consumption, physical activity and avoidance of obesity, healthy dietary practices, reducing occupational and environment exposure, immunization against hepatitis B virus, prevention, control of *Opisthorchis viverrini* infection and public education. As Thailand, has a very strong anti-smoking programme, we collaborate with national and international organization in developing strategies for tobacco control. Recently, on World Cancer Day, we joined the UICC cancer prevention campaign “I Love My Healthy Active Childhood”, during the year 2007-2011.

Early detection

The NCCP of Thailand has included programmes for screening and early detection of cervical, breast, oral and colorectal cancer. At present, we have national policy to perform Pap smear test in the women, aged 35, 40, 45, 50, 55 and 60 years in all of the primary health care centers and hospitals in Thailand. Department of Medical Services (National cancer Institute) is responsible for screening by Pap smear. Furthermore, we also have a demonstration project for cervical control by Visual Inspection Acetic Acid (VIA). Department of Health is responsible for cervical cancer screening by VIA. We have a new model of X-ray mammography mobile unit which can be served

for breast cancer screening in the country. A pilot study for colorectal screening using two different brands of immunochemical FOBTs to test the feasibility, as well as acceptability and cost effectiveness of the programme is also conducted.

Treatment

We have established a National Working Group for all common cancers including cervical, breast, lung, liver and colorectal cancers. The clinical practice guidelines and referring system were performed followed the consensus of these working groups. Our cancer care team work together at national and international level towards the improvement of treatment modalities.

Palliative Care

Most of cancer cases in Thailand are incurable when diagnosed. Palliative care therefore deserves high priority in cancer therapy. We developed cancer pain control guidelines for health care providers and patients. Also, we have home visit service to give palliative care for low income patient. In relations with Asia, many activities were conducted, such as in 2007, we co-organized the training course for palliative care for Asia-Pacific Palliative Network.

Cancer Research

We support the study on basic, clinical and epidemiological research to gain more complete understanding of the genetic, environmental, behavioral and sociocultural factors in the development of common cancers. For a few decades, many collaborative research projects were conducted between our scientists and experts from different countries in the region. For example, liver and breast cancer projects are conducting under Thai-Japan cooperation. We also join the Breast Cancer Association Consortium, International NPC Working Group, Asian Interlymph Consortium and International Liver Cancer Study.