

Thai Drug Systems 2020

While medicines play a crucial role in the health systems, they also contribute to the rapidly increasing cost of providing health services. In Thailand, medicine prices, particularly single-source manufacturer or patented drugs are often higher than those in many high-income countries. The World Health Organization estimates that globally up to 40 per cent of medicines are used irrationally. Additionally, the irrational use of medicines creates tremendous side and toxic effects. There is also evidence that differences in health insurance schemes lead to inequitable access to essential medicines.

To achieve the goal of the sustainable Universal Health Coverage – universal access to essential health services and technologies without financial barrier – a country needs a decent and well managed medicine systems. The systems include how essential medicines are developed, selected, produced/imported, procured, equitably distributed, effectively accessed and rationally used under ‘good governance’. Good management of the systems would reduce waste and cost and increase access to essential medicines.

This theme issue, ‘**Thai Drug Systems 2020**’, of the Journal of Health Science, Ministry of Public

Health, Thailand, includes 14 articles describing various components of the Thai drug systems. All articles are extracted from the 14 chapters in the third Thai Drug System Report 2019. The report assessed current situations, and proposed concrete recommendations for development. The Report, since its first edition in 1995, has been well recognized and widely referred to among Thai academics, researchers, and policy advocates. This theme issue, in English, now attempts to meet the interests of the international community

The authors are experts from various ‘walk of lives’ related to medicines systems, from both public and private sector. They include academics, health professionals, civil society organizations and policy makers. Although the chapters and articles have been extensively reviewed including a few face-to-face consultation meetings, they still have limitations. These include the availability of the required information, the authors’ interest to contribute and time constraints.

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