**Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) for HFMD in Thailand**

Students Name

Institutional Affiliation

Course Code

Professors Name

Date Due

Thailand is a Southeast Asian country in the Chao Phraya River delta. It has been around for thousands of years, surrounded by Myanmar (Burma), Malaysia, and Laos. Thailand is known for its culture, including fine arts and cuisine. It is a constitutional monarchy and one of the world's largest economies. According to Srisangnam (2019), the country's economy was ranked 20th globally by GDP. Thailand contains many climates. The northern part of the country has a cool climate, while the south has a tropical rainforest climate. It is known for its tropical weather all year long. The rainy season lasts long for six to eight months. Some of the common languages spoken in Thailand include Thai, Burmese, Lao, Mon, Khmer, and Hindi. Thai is the country's national language.

Three of the highest priority health issues identified by Thailand's Ministry of Public Health include diabetes, obesity, and hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD). Diabetes occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin or its cells do not react to the insulin produced by the body. It causes high blood glucose levels and can damage the eyes, kidneys, and nerves if poorly managed. It may also cause heart disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) 2016’s diabetes country profiles attributed 4 percent of the country's deaths to diabetes and reported a 9.6 percent prevalence of diabetes (WHO, 2016). Obesity occurs when the body has too much fat. It can lead to diabetes, heart disease, and other health problems. In 2016, the WHO reported a 9.2 percent prevalence of obesity in Thailand (WHO, 2016). Finally, HFMD is a viral disease that spreads through saliva and can cause a rash or sore throat. This virus spreads through person-to-person contact or contact with contaminated surfaces and mainly affects children under six years of age. According to Laor et al. (2020), Thailand recorded 70,000 HFMD cases and three deaths in 2018.

Health workers need to know why social determinants of health (SDOH) are so strong in Thailand for HFMD. The lack of clean running water and access to soap is a worrying SDOH for HFMD in the country. In the slums of Bangkok, people live in crowded houses or shacks with no running water or electricity. These conditions remain relatively similar in other parts of the country. Research has shown that proper hygiene, particularly washing hands with soap, is the best defense against HFMD (Suliman, 2017). The lack of running water and access to soap is a significant problem in daycare centers which studies have proved to be instrumental to the spread of HFMD. But these households and daycare centers mostly lack access to these lifesaving resources. This has a direct impact on the prevalence of HFMD in Thailand. Laor et al.'s (2020) study underscored that "the number of sinks in restrooms and [daycare centers were] major concerns for HFMD outbreaks" (p. 1).

References

Laor, P., Apidechkul, T., Khunthason, S., Keawdounglek, V., Sudsandee, S., Fakkaew, K., & Siriratruengsuk, W. (2020). Association of environmental factors and high HFMD occurrence in northern Thailand. *BMC Public Health*, *20*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-09905-w

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Suliman, Q. B. (2017). Predictors of preventive practices towards hand-foot-and-mouth disease among mothers of preschool children using socioecological model in Klang district.

WHO. (2016, May). *Diabetes Thailand 2016 country profile*. WHO. https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/diabetes-tha-country-profile-thailand-2016

Date of Email

Dear Sir,

My name is **student’s name**. I am a public health student interested in reducing the prevalence of hand, foot, and mouth disease in Thailand. I am writing to you about the SDOH for hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) and how I am trying to get involved since you are the Director of Epidemiology at King Narai Hospital in Thailand. As you well know, studies have shown that social determinants of health (SDOH) have a significant bearing on health outcomes. For instance, a pregnant mother that recently became unemployed may face weight gain issues because of failure to afford enough food for her and three kids (Sufrin, Davidson & Markenson, 2018). A low-income patient may arrive late to her doctor's appointment because of unreliable public transport (Sufrin et al., 2018).

I wanted to know if you would be willing to provide some resources for me. I am interested in learning the incidence rate for HFMD in the surrounding area based on your hospital data. My non-profit aims to eradicate HFMD in Thailand by providing hygiene services to communities and daycare centers living within identified HFMD hot zones. Studies of the social and environmental determinants of health revealed that proper hygiene, particularly handwashing with soap, is the best control measure against HFMD (Laor et al., 2020; Suliman, 2017). Your expertise and resources would go a long way in ensuring that our intervention measures reach communities in most need. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at student’s phone number.

I look forward to your feedback.

References

Laor, P., Apidechkul, T., Khunthason, S., Keawdounglek, V., Sudsandee, S., Fakkaew, K., & Siriratruengsuk, W. (2020). Association of environmental factors and high HFMD occurrence in northern Thailand. *BMC Public Health*, *20*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-09905-w>

Sufrin, C., Davidson, A., & Markenson, G. (2018). Importance of social determinants of health and cultural awareness in the delivery of reproductive health care. *OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY*, *131*(1), E43-E48.

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