

ABSTRACT

The objective of the research was to study preventive behaviors of Iodine Deficiency Disorders among school-aged children, including the effect of demographic variables, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and the environment on preventive behaviors. This study was conducted in schools in Chiangmai Province. The methods used in this study involved administering 1) an interview questionnaire for those students in grade 5 and 6, and 2) the Indepth Interview Guideline for health teachers and students' parents. Statistical analysis involved determining percentages, and utilizing Chi-square and Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis.

The findings of this study are summarized as follows:

1) the majority of respondents did not appear to engage in behaviors that would prevent the development of Iodine Deficiency Disorders. For example, most respondents did not consistently consume sufficient quantities of iodized water both at home and school. However, it was found that about 83% of the respondents usually used iodized salt, not iodized fish sauce, for their everyday cooking. Concerning sea food consumption, only a few students were able to eat sea foods at their home and school.

2) Factors related to preventive behaviors associated with Iodine Deficiency Disorders among students were in descending order, a) social support, b) beliefs, c) illness experiences, d) health information about Iodine Deficiency Disorders, and e) sex. These factors were moderately related to the effects of iodine deficiency, but were rarely associated with any changes in preventive behaviors. Specifically, it was found that a) female students, b) students with iodine illness experience, c) those believing in scientific knowledge about Iodine Deficiency Disorders, d) those having social support, and e) those who obtained more information about Iodine Deficiency Disorders, appeared to engage in behaviors that would prevent the disease. On the other hand, a) male students, b) students without iodine illness experience c) those not believing in scientific knowledge, and d) those lacking social support and, e) those who had not obtained health information about Iodine Deficiency Disorders, had less appeared to engage in behaviors that would place them at risk for the disease. Sex, social support and accessibility of iodized water were individually statistically associated with preventive behaviors.

Recomendations:

Providing accurate information concerning behaviors preventive of Iodine Deficiency Disorders to school-aged children would improve the effectiveness of the "Iodine Deficiency Disorders" Project. The results of this study provides information that will assist in the management of the Project, as well as facilitate co-operation between the health care service and the local school system. The Project can be made more effective by recognizing the importance of social support conditions and student gender.