

The National Study on the Distribution of ORS in Thailand
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ABSTRACT

The study on the distribution of ORS in Thailand has 3 objectives which are to study the history of ORS in Thailand, to study the ORS marketing and distribution and to study knowledge, attitudes and practice of ORS and their determinants among the ORS target consumers. The findings from the study suggested that the distribution of ORS carried out by the national health service work force has been a success as ORS packets have been made available in all existing health service centers in the rural areas of the country. Awareness of ORS has also been reported high among target users. However, the awareness of ORS existence was high, the attitudes and acceptance of ORS were not always positive due to ignorance concerning the substance. As ORS could be obtained on a free of charge basis, ORS had an image of an item being used among the poor who could not afford a better quality products such as other commercial electrolyte products. Moreover, the poor acceptance among consumers was also found to be related to the unpleasant taste and short shelf life of ORS. Even among some pediatricians the low acceptance of ORS was observed. These doctors found ORS to be inappropriate for use with very young children. The role of private sector in the distribution of ORS was rather limited as drug store owners perceived ORS as the product of low quality and low demand. The Government Pharmaceutical Organization was also regarded by the private sector to have inflexible trading terms making dealing in business rather difficult.

The government, thus, should take immediate actions in improving the quality of ORS as well as increasing the ORS production to meet the real demand of the substance. NCCDP needed to increase the level of knowledge concerning ORS among the health service providers and recipients as it was believed to be the most crucial tool to bring the people to accept and use ORS at the correct time when it could be of best benefit.