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Abstract

Mutual learning process between Thai traditional medicine practitioners and pharmacists in developing the standard of Thai traditional products and usages aims at a survey of traditional medicine production and usage situation, arranging the activities for mutual learning among traditional medicine practitioners and pharmacists, gathering viewpoints and the ways of developing the product standard , promoting and encouraging traditional medicine manufactures.

The target groups of this study were 20 pharmacists from Chiang Mai Provincial Public Health Office, community hospitals and The faculty of Pharmacy, Chiang Mai University and 40 practitioners at manufacturers, community hospitals and villages. Data collection was carried out by interview, experience exchanging forums , study tour and seminar.

The results show that there were wide range of producing and usage of Thai traditional medicines. The products were produced by community traditional medicine practitioners for sale rather than for individual cure. The curing role of those practitioners was lessen due to lacking of descendants and the socioeconomic factors that resulted in the decrease of study cases for knowledge transfer. The activities arranged for mutual learning between traditional practitioners and pharmacists enabled them learn that the difficulties in Thai traditional medicine registration process and correct labeling were important problems and could be assisted by pharmacists. Various types of collaboration experiences could be used as a model in their communities as appropriate.

To develop the producing standard of Thai traditional medicine, it is suggested to categorize into two levels, i.e. manufacturer and community-based level. There were three groups of producers : 1) To produce for uses and sale in the community 2) To produce for sale in and out of community 3) To produce for export sale. Therefore each group should be appropriately developed , for instance, the first group is initially promoted to enable for self-support and for conserving the local-wisdom whereas the second and third groups should be initially promoted to fulfil the official producing standard. Mutual learning activities leads to continuing collaboration between practitioners and supporting sectors such as consultants, financial resources, marketing and export promoting centers and politicians.