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The conference opening ceremony on 28 June 2024 at Pullman Hotel, Luang Prabang Province, Lao PDR

The 14th International Conference on Public Health among Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Countries in Luang Prabang from 27-29th June 2024

“Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals through Improved Nutrition, Health Equity, and Climate Change Adaptation

The 14th ICPH among GMS Countries is to address the global health challenge issues of climate change, nutrition, the SDGs, health equity, and collaboration among GMS Countries. The conference was a great success, featuring 526 participants from more than twenty institutions and development agencies attended the conference with 148 participants giving oral presentations, 214 poster presentations, and 8 online presentations in addition to plenary sessions. This conference successfully facilitated the sharing of health experiences and active participation from all stakeholders and institutions.

It achieved several milestones, including the successful completion of the 14th international conference, providing a platform for public health experts to meet, share experiences, and learn from each other. It also effectively advocated for the ICPH-GMS and highlighted the benefits of networking and academic sharing among international counterparts. Additionally, the new pre-conference learning labs demonstrated successful knowledge exchange, allowing experts, students, and professors to share experiences and develop public health research skills and will hopefully become a standard feature of ICPH-GMS conferences in future, especially for students seeking to expand their knowledge in this field.

The conference was supported by USAID with technical support from professors and researchers from Purdue and Indiana Universities (USA) via the ANRCB project, CRS Lao PDR.

See all information at: [Home \(fph-uhs.edu.la\)](http://Home(fph-uhs.edu.la))

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ANRCB Awards Funding for Four Research Projects to UHS and LaoTPHI

Subsequent to the successful completion and endorsement of the National Nutrition Research Agenda, researchers from the UHS Faculty of Public Health and the Lao Tropical Public Health Institute (LaoTPHI) have been awarded funding for four research projects by the ANRCB project that are advancing national research priorities. The awarded projects include:



- "Assessment of Micronutrients Policy and Programs for Pregnant Women and Children Under Five in Lao PDR" Researcher: Mr. Bounhome Soukphaphone, LaoTPHI
- "Assessment of Daily School Lunch and a Week Average of the Macronutrients and Energy Intake and Evaluation of the Key Drivers of Local School Meals Cooked in Local Schools Among Teachers and Cooks in Two Provinces, Lao PDR 2024" Researcher: Ms. Somphone Soukhavong, Health and Nutrition Section, LaoTPHI

- "Dietary intake of 24-hour recall and 24-hour urinary composition of hypertensive patients: Hospital-based, cross-sectional study" Researcher: Dr. Vathsana Somphet, Deputy Head of Epidemiology and Biostatistics
- "The Views of Adolescent Girls, Community Members, and Healthcare Professionals on Dietary Habits and Supplementation Practices in Adolescent Pregnancy in Huaphan Province: A Qualitative Study" Researcher: Dr. Souksamone Thongmixay, Deputy Head of Health Promotion and Nutrition Department

The preliminary results of these research projects are expected to be presented during the closing meeting of the ANRCB project in September 2024.

Anthropometry Measurement Guide for Facilitators

Center of Nutrition distributed the new national guideline on anthropometry for young children to health facilities in all 18 provinces in Lao PDR as well as to stakeholders such as researchers. In total 4000 copies of the guidelines have now been distributed in coordination with the training of a core group of national and provincial trainers to help develop these important skills. Adoption of the guide is further supported by a series of training videos to encourage self-study and review. Use of correct technique in care provision and research will help improve the quality of nutrition assessment and data on crucial nutrition outcomes and trends in Lao PDR. <https://bit.ly/4bBeRbS>



Lao Pediatric Continuing Medical Education Conference

"The Essentials of Effective Child Health Management"

On May 29-30, 2024, the Lao Pediatric Association conducted its annual conference at Donchan Palace in Vientiane, attracting more than 250 Lao doctors, midwives, and nurses. The ANRCB project supported the participation of two esteemed university professors from Thailand to ensure the program offered evidence-based nutrition content to enable doctors to apply emerging research in their care:



Assoc. Prof. Kitti Sranacharoenpong from Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand, presented on research "Quantity and Quality of Breastmilk of a Group of Laotian Lactating Women" conducted in northern Lao PDR and Assoc. Prof. Suchaorn Saengnipanthkul from Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand, presented the newly updated 2023 WHO Complementary Feeding Guidelines and evidence behind them. The conference provided an excellent platform to share new research findings on preventative and therapeutic approaches for diseases among children.

New Nutrition Research Spotlight

Dozens of new research projects were shared at the recent 14th ICPH among GMS Countries in both oral and poster presentations. Here are some of the nutrition projects shared. You can find all the proceedings at

<https://bit.ly/3zAKGUV>

Dietary Diversity and Child Nutrition in Vientiane, Lao PDR

A recent community-based study by Dr. Chansathit Taikeophithoun, Deputy-head, Department of health promotion and nutrition, Faculty of public health, UHS. Research in Hadxayfong District, Vientiane, examined the association between dietary diversity and nutritional status in children aged 6-59 months. The study found that 68.3% of children met the minimum dietary diversity requirement, but no direct link between dietary diversity and malnutrition was observed. However, several other factors were identified as significant contributors to malnutrition. Low birth weight and higher birth order increased the likelihood of stunting, while children who were never breastfed or had caregivers who inconsistently rinsed vegetables and fruits were more prone to being underweight. Consumption of soft drinks was strongly associated with wasting, and the child's sex also played a role, with females being less likely to be overweight. The findings highlight the need for integrated, multisectoral interventions to promote appropriate breastfeeding, complementary feeding, and diverse, nutritious food consumption to combat malnutrition in Lao PDR. chansathit@gmail.com

Knowledge and Behavior of Poorly Controlled Type 2 Diabetes Patients in Central Hospital, Lao PDR

Phoutsathaphone Sibounheuang, Deputy Head of Pharmaceutical Care Department, Faculty of pharmacy, UHS and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional study in Lao PDR to evaluate the knowledge and behavior of 315 patients with poorly controlled type 2 diabetes. Results showed that a majority of participants had poor knowledge regarding diabetes (60.3%), diet control (54.3%), and exercise (85.4%), while 52.7% had good knowledge about medication use. Behavior towards self-management was poor in 59% of participants, but good regarding medication use (77.5%) and doctor visits (92.1%). The study found no association between patient characteristics and behavior, but there was a significant link between medication knowledge and behavior. These findings highlight the urgent need for enhanced patient education and individualized management plans to improve diabetes control and prevent complications in Lao PDR. phoutsathaphone.s@uhs.edu.la

Screening Anemia in Children and Adolescent Girls in Lao PDR

Latdaphone Paphatsinh and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional study using a non-invasive Pulse Co-oximetry method (spHb) to screen for anemia in children aged 3-6 years and adolescent girls aged 13-15 years in Khammouane and Luang Prabang provinces. The study included 407 participants, revealing anemia prevalence rates of 41.8% in children and 29.6% in adolescent girls. The mean hemoglobin levels detected were 13.3 g/dL, with a mean perfusion index of 4.9. The study highlights the effectiveness of non-invasive methods for early anemia detection, enabling timely interventions such as iron supplementation and deworming. These findings underscore the importance of primary screening to mitigate the adverse developmental impacts of anemia in children and adolescents in Lao PDR. paphatsinh.ldp@gmail.com



NIPN Snippets

New NIPN policy briefs are in the process of final editing and will be released soon in both English and Lao languages:

- Economic Loss from School Dropout and Grade Repetition due to Malnutrition in Lao PDR
- Subsistence Agriculture, Household Food Security, and Women's and Children's Dietary Diversity in Lao PDR
- The Influence of Socio-Demographic Variables on Child Food Poverty
- Determinants affecting women's Body Mass Index (BMI) in Lao PDR

2024 Research Topics to be confirmed soon

The Socio-economic Policy Research Institute (SPRI) will finalize its 2024 research topics in July based on the national nutrition research agenda to help guide evidence-based policy decisions by the Government of Lao PDR.

NIPN's Data Mapping being updated

The first comprehensive data mapping exercise was conducted in 2019 by each sector at central level to identify relevant nutrition related data collected routinely to develop a data repository on the NIPN website. In July, the NIPN team is conducting a second round of data mapping to update the data landscape at central level and extend it to sub-national level for the first time. The multi-sectoral central team will be joined by members from all sectors at central and sub-national level, including six provinces: Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Khammuane, Savannakhet, Salavan and Attapeu.

NIPN news, documents and data dashboards can be found at: <https://dri.gov.la/dashboard/index.html>

Nutrition Research Webinars

There are now 22 webinars hosted on the ANRCB YouTube channel providing an excellent opportunity to catch up on new research and review techniques. Recent additions include:

3 April 2024 "Results of National Nutrition Sentinel Surveillance round 2, 2023" by Mr. Souphaxay Khamphanthong Deputy of Research and Surveillance Section, Center for Nutrition.

8 May 2024 "Understanding discrepancies in nutritional outcomes among under-fives in Laos An exploratory mixed-methods study using the positive deviance approach" by Mr. Sayvisene Boulom PhD, Deputy of Rural Economics and Food Technology, Faculty of Agriculture, National University of Laos.

5 June 2024 "Results of the Lao Zinc Study" Mrs. Sengchan Kounavong MD PhD (Prof. Adjunct), Vice Chair, Lao Public Health Association.

The next webinars planned are:

July 3, 2024 "Baseline Survey Results Improved access to health services for women, infants and young children, Samoay (Salavan province) and Houn (Oudomxay province) district" by Dr. Ketsadasak Kiattisak Head of Public Health and Nutrition Programme, PLAN International in Lao PDR

August 8, 2024: "Emergence of National Nutrition Policy in the Lao People's Democratic Republic: an analysis of collaborations between governmental and external actors" by Dr. Viengsamay Sengchaleun, Researcher of Singapore University in Lao PDR.

September 9, 2024: "Result of Training Gestational Diabetes Mellitus for the Health care Provider" By Ms. Souphaphone Louangdouangsithidet MSC, Deputy head of Nutrition Department, Mahosot Hospital

Webinars are uploaded in English and Lao on ANRCB YouTube Channel: <https://bit.ly/4buFq2F>