

Prevalence, Acceptability and Accesibility of Tobacco, Alcohol and Illegal Drugs Among School Children in a Rural Market Town in Isaan, Thailand

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The purpose of this study was to determine prevalence, acceptability and accessibility of tobacco, alcohol and drugs use among younger high school children in a small market town in North-eastern Thailand. The area is not an especially high risk area but fairly typical of poor rural Thailand. Although there have been national surveys of smoking and drinking habits in Thailand, there are few surveys where school children have been asked themselves about health damaging behaviours and especially what they think should be done about it.

On the whole children themselves were well aware of the problems and although users were more likely to consider that substance abuse was acceptable the majority did not. Children recognised the hypocrisy of adults who told them one thing and did another.

The process of this study was as important as the results because it enabled children's opinions to be heard by those able to make changes; health professionals, teachers, police and civic officers.