

The need to provide training and education on “Health and Human rights” for Burmese health workers in Thailand and India.

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Rationale

The HIV/AIDS pandemic, women’s health issues including violence, and the violations of human rights which occurred in such places as the Balkans and the Great Lakes region in Africa have taught us the intrinsic connections that exist between health and human rights. There is a complex relationship between human rights and health:

- Violations or lack of attention to human rights can have serious health consequences
- Health policies and programs can promote or violate human rights in the way they are designed or implemented

Yet health and human rights are powerful approach to promoting and advancing human well-being. It is now clear that regardless of the effectiveness of modern technologies, the underlying social, economics, and political situations which are related with human rights conditions have to be addressed as well in the health care paradigm. Attention to human rights is growing worldwide and WHO is actively engaged in increasing its understanding of human rights in relation to health. In year 2002 WHO has appointed a Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to health, Dr Paul Hunt. *United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said “It is my aspiration that health will be finally be seen not as a blessing to be wished for, but as a human right to be fought for.”*

It is imperative that health professionals and health care workers of Burma understand the fundamental linkages between health and human rights and the way in which those linkages can influence the course of health practice in Burma. Building and strengthening the information and education about health and human rights is required in order to implement the concept. When people are sufficiently knowledgeable about the linkages between health and human rights, they will be able to identify the issues for which the synergy of human rights and health is critical, and act accordingly. Health and human rights is the fundamental approach that may positively improve the lives of oppressed people in Burma.

Aims and Objectives

1. To be able to acquire a basic understanding of the history, sources and contents of international human rights law and treaties, including the right to health.
2. To understand and explore the value and impact of linking health and human rights.

3. To be able to analyze the health impacts resulting from violations of human rights.
4. To have knowledge of how health workers and their professional organizations like "BMA" can protect and respect human rights.
5. To develop the capability to work efficiently and effectively in groups and be able to communicate through presentations and discussions.
6. To form basic unit of Health as Human Rights Education advocacy network along the border areas of Burma.

Activities

- Education
Ongoing activities on offering seminars and ad hoc training workshops at Mae Tao clinic and other Thai Burma and India Burma border areas
- Research and documentation
To address health consequences of human rights violations in the populations of illegal migrants, IDPs and refugees from Burma
- Advocacy and information dissemination
By publishing and working with the media

Outcome

Health workers and people in health related fields will begin to recognize the importance of the protection and promotion of human rights as necessary precondition for individual and community health. The results of research and documentation will be translated into evidence that can be used for advocacy and to promote awareness to the international community about human rights situation in Burma and border areas.