

## The Development of Herbal Products and Community Health Promotion with Applied Thai Traditional Medicine

The Development of Herbal Products and Community Health Promotion with Applied Thai Traditional Medicine is an ongoing project by the School of Medicine, Walailak University. It is part of the Project Series "Walailak Health Model: Restoring Quality of Life and Creating Sustainable Well-being in Community Areas Around the University." It focuses on developing Thai traditional medicine products and services, utilizing local herbs to create community-based products. It begins with planning, conducting surveys on health issues, and assessing the needs of people in the communities around Walailak University. This leads to the design, allocation, and execution of projects that align with the community's actual needs. The project integrates applied Thai traditional medicine through the course "Thai Traditional Therapeutic Massage 3," combined with physical therapy knowledge from the course "Basic Physical Therapy in the Community" and pharmacy studies from the courses "Spa and Natural Spa Products" and "Fundamental Pharmacognosy."

From the survey of herbal knowledge through field visits, questionnaires, and interviews, it was found that the majority of the population suffers from chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and osteoarthritis. These individuals are at risk of becoming bedridden patients in the future. They have been managing their health by regularly seeing doctors and taking medication over an extended period. Currently, community members are paying attention to their health by using herbs as an alternative treatment method. However, there is still a lack of knowledge or correct guidelines for herbal use. Although some households grow herbs or identify herbs within their own areas, they are unaware of their benefits or how to use them properly for health care.

In response, the project team deliver outreach programmes and projects in the local community by organizing activities to disseminate knowledge about herbal use for health care to interested community representatives. By showcasing herbs commonly found in households or the community, the aim was to make it easy for people to incorporate them into their self-care routines. This was done through lectures and knowledge-testing games following the practical training workshop, which aimed to develop the capacity of community health leaders and personnel in using Thai traditional medicine for health care.

Additionally, a skill-building activity focused on processing herbal products to promote health, such as making herbal tea from local herbs. This activity, designed to enhance the health of the Satit Walailak Pattana Community, allowed participants to engage in hands-on practice from start to finish. They learned to correctly select raw materials, clean them, grind them into

smaller pieces, sun-dry them, and package them into tea bags for brewing. Educational materials on herbal knowledge, precautions, and health care tips were also provided during the workshop.

In addition, the project team conducted follow-up activities to monitor the project's progress through home visits and community surveys, focusing on at-risk groups, bedridden patients, and migrant workers. These follow-ups evaluated the impact of activities that provided knowledge, supported the use of herbs, and promoted the processing of herbs for self-care within the community. This initiative was carried out through interdisciplinary collaboration between doctors, nurses, village health volunteers (VHV), public health officials from sub-district health promoting hospitals, and faculty from Walailak University's programs in Thai traditional medicine, physical therapy, and pharmacy. This collaboration played a crucial role in strengthening the mechanisms for sustainable health care (SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals).

Additionally, the project team shared their findings at academic exhibitions on community service and area-based research aligned with sustainable development goals. These exhibitions were presented to the public and representatives from agencies in Nakhon Si Thammarat province to encourage the expansion of activities to other areas surrounding Walailak University.