

## **Ban Khlong Khut reduces risky behavior and lowers blood pressure.**

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**Background:** Hypertension is a significant public health issue both in Thailand and globally. The World Health Organization reports that the number of people with hypertension has doubled, with more than half of the patients unaware of their risks. In Thailand, approximately 30% of the population suffers from hypertension. Higher blood pressure levels further increase the risk of mortality from cardiovascular diseases. In a health screening in Ban Khlong Khut, Pak Nakorn Subdistrict, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, among 126 people aged 35 and over, 48.4% were found to be at risk for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), 11.5% were at risk for hypertension, and 50% of NCD patients were diagnosed with hypertension.

The School of Nursing at Walailak University has recognized the impact on health for both high-risk groups and patients with hypertension. In collaboration with the community, they have sought ways to address these issues by changing dietary habits and promoting exercise to reduce blood pressure and improve health. Therefore, they have developed the Ban Khlong Khut reduces risky behavior and lowers blood pressure Project' to help the community achieve sustainable health.

**Target population:** The main target population involves a total of 65 participants, consisting of 15 members of the project team and 50 individuals from high-risk groups and patients with hypertension.

**Procedure:** The behavioral modification activities are divided into two sub-activities as follows: 1) Physical exercise, which includes walking, aerobics, and organizing walking and running events, and 2) Sodium and monosodium glutamate (MSG) reduction, in both households and local businesses to decrease the amount of sodium and MSG used in food preparation. Additionally, there is a campaign to encourage local businesses to participate in sodium reduction in their food preparation. The project also includes monitoring and evaluating the implementation and changes every month after participation to track blood pressure levels.

**Collaborative Efforts:** The success of this project was due to the collaboration between community leaders and various organizations, including the Pak Nakorn Subdistrict Administrative Organization, the Wat Muk Thara Tambon Health Promotion Hospital, village

health volunteers and the School of Nursing at Walailak University, with funding support from The Thailand Health Promotion Foundation. (ThaiHealth)

**Project Outcomes:** A group of 15 committee members implemented the project plan and its outcomes. Both the high-risk group and the patients with hypertension demonstrated an understanding and made health behavior changes in two areas: reducing dietary sodium/monosodium glutamate intake and engaging in regular physical activity.

More than 50% of the high-risk group did not develop hypertension, and the patients with hypertension achieved effective blood pressure management.

**Conclusion:** This project has enabled the community to gain knowledge, understanding, and make behavioral changes in dietary habits and physical activity to reduce the risk of developing hypertension. Through community involvement, the project is committed to fostering sustainable health behavior changes, improving public health, and promoting community cohesion.