

Sa Kaeo residents have bright lives, and far from Hypertension

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Background: Hypertension is a significant health issue for the population. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), it is found that nearly 1.3 billion people aged 30-79 years suffered from hypertension. It often shows no symptoms in the early stages but can be diagnosed. Furthermore, hypertension is a risk factor for other diseases, such as ischemic heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, etc., which are causes of premature death. Hypertension also has serious consequences, with approximately 4 out of 5 patients with hypertension not receiving adequate treatment.

Hypertension is one of the NCDs (Non-Communicable Diseases), and it is a major public health concern in Thailand. The report of the health survey of the Thai population shows that more than 7 million people were unaware that they had a high risk of hypertension, and the number of patients is increasing year after year. According to the Ministry of Public Health's database, it was shown that in 2022, Thai people had 6.8 million hypertensions, an increase of 200,000 from 2021. Furthermore, in 2023, the number of cases of hypertension in Thailand was dramatically increased, with 507,104 new cases. However, the health problems among the people at Sa-Keaw shows in the table following:

Disease	Number of Risk Person	Number of Sickness
1. Hypertension	62	163
2. Diabetes Millitus	65	83
3. Metabolic syndrome	85	55
4. Other disease	-	24

Objective of project: This project has two main objectives: 1) Promoting healthy eating habits to enhance the quality of life of Sa Kaeo community members of all ages, including vulnerable people, migrant employees, as well as visitors of the Sa Kaeo community—to recognize the significance of maintaining good health and avoiding hypertension disease; and 2) Fostering the practice of self-care and food selection among individuals at risk of hypertension and those who are already experiencing it, all age groups, including the

vulnerable people, migrant employees, as well as the visitors of the Sa Kaeo community, increasing their awareness and understanding of how to maintain good health and prevent themselves from hypertension.

Target group: A total of 62 people from the at-risk group for hypertension in the community and 163 people from the group already suffering from hypertension were screened and adopted proper health behaviors according to the 2A principles (diet and exercise). A working group of 12 people was established to carry out and monitor the project to ensure its success in achieving its goals.

Project Collaboration: This project received collaboration from both the public and private sectors, including the School of Nursing, Walailak University, leaders of Sa Kaeo community, village health volunteers, the Subdistrict Administrative Organization of Sa Kaeo, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, and it was financially supported by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth).

Project Outcome: The project led to the establishment of 12 health leaders, including village health volunteers, village leaders, public health officials, and the council president. These leaders held regular meetings and worked systematically, enabling the project to proceed according to the planned schedule. Among the 85 people who participated in the screening, 25% were found to be at risk of developing hypertension, and 63 people from the at-risk group volunteered to join the project. As a result of their participation, 90% of the target group and their families gained knowledge about proper food choices and exercise suitable for their age. Additionally, a 'low-salt food' policy was introduced, with a measure of the salt of food that they brought for shared meals during training sessions. Furthermore, 60% of the 63 participants experienced a reduction in their body mass index (BMI), and 37 people had a decrease in waist circumference.

Consequently: The success of the project has improved the health and happiness of Sa Kaeo community members through regular exercise and healthy eating habits. Furthermore, it has also reduced household expenditures related to illness.