Problems in the Drug System Related to Household Medicine Classification Criteria: A Gap Analysis for Modernizing the Criteria

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1 BACKGROUND

Drug classification should not only consider access to medication but should also take into account the risks associated with drug use, which should be factored into drug classification. Additionally, the classification of household remedies or over-the-counter medications in each country depends on that country's policies and specific issues regarding drug access and prevention of harm or risks from medication use, and these classifications may change at any time.

2 OBJECTIVES

This study aims to to examine the concepts or pain points of the drug system related to the criteria for classifying household remedies in Thailand and to develop policy recommendations to address gaps in the current drug system related to the criteria for classifying household remedies in Thailand.

3 METHODS

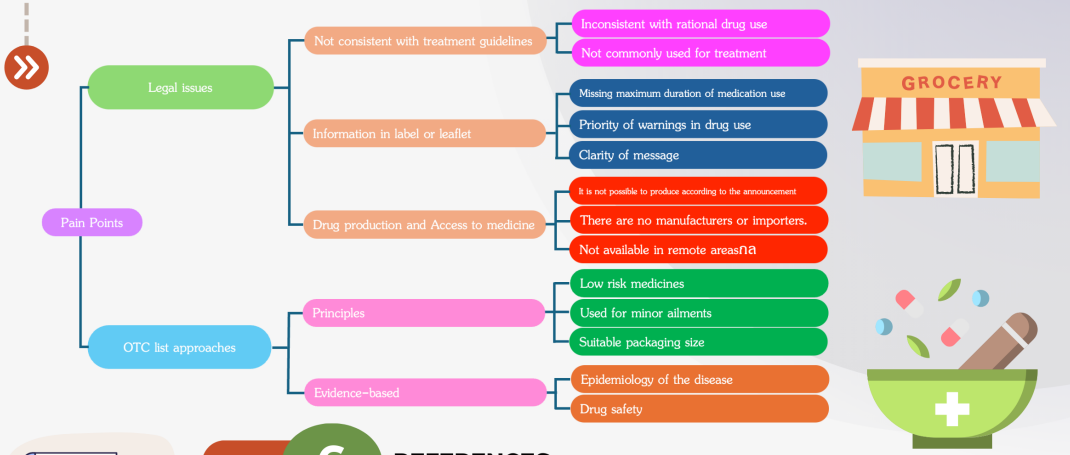
This research employs a multi-method qualitative approach comprising two phases. Phase 1 involves a literature review of Thailand's household medicine classification criteria over the past 20 years (2005-2024), analyzing the conceptual framework of the criteria. Phase 2 consists of in-depth interviews with stakeholders involved in establishing household medicine classification criteria. Content analysis was performed, followed by a synthesis of findings from both phases to develop policy recommendations addressing gaps in the current Thai household medicine classification system.

4 RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

- ✔ Previous household medicine classification criteria in Thailand were established based on two types of data:
  (1) epidemiological disease data, which indicates the public health necessity for basic self-care and drug accessibility
  (2) drug safety data, which is determined by various risk factors including drug abuse, antimicrobial resistance, and severe adverse reactions.
- ✔ Results from in-depth interviews identified gaps in the household medicine classification criteria, specifically the need for risk-benefit study data and therapeutic category information that aligns with current treatment guidelines.
- ✔ However, criteria improvements should involve public consultation with citizens, who are directly affected by drug classification in terms of self-care, drug accessibility, and drug information access.
- ✔ Additionally, consultation with pharmaceutical manufacturers is necessary, as changes may impact drug production processes, production costs, and manufacturing feasibility, ensuring alignment with public needs.

5 CONCLUSION

Future classification criteria should maintain a balance between improving drug accessibility and maintaining public safety, while considering the dynamic nature of medical advances and evolving healthcare needs. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and healthcare authorities in developing more robust and responsive drug classification systems in Thailand.



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