

National Survey on Smoking Situation in Royal Thai Police

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Objective: Study current smoking situation among Royal Thai Police officers nationwide.

Material and Method: 20,000 questionnaires about smoking behavior, amount of cigarettes smoked per day, and staging of smoking cessation were distributed between March and August 2008 to 1) the Office of the Top Management, 2) every bureau nationwide, 3) every division of any police bureau, 4) six biggest police stations from every division, and 5) three subdivisions from every division in supporting bureau. The Police General Hospital, Police Education Bureau, Police Cadet Academy, Office of Inspector General, and Office of the Royal Court Security Police were excluded from this survey.

Results: Of all 20,000 questionnaires distributed, 14,231 completed questionnaires were received during the five-month study period. Nationwide, 30.9% of Thai police smoke, 33.4% of male police officers smoke while only 3.3% of female police officers do. Among five groups classified by organizational structure, the Metropolitan Police Bureau has the highest smoking rate of 33.9%. Detective police smoking rate of 40.3% is the highest among field of police work. Ten point one percent of the police officers who currently smoke are addicted to nicotine in the high level of 20 or more cigarettes per day. However, 60.4% of the police officers who currently smoke attempt to quit smoking at least once a year, but fail and 84.7% of the entire police officers agree with the smoke-free workplace policy, which has already been implemented and 76.0% of the police officers who currently smoke agree with the 100% smoke-free police station policy.

Conclusion: The smoking rate of Thai police is higher than the average smoking rate of Thai population. In order to decrease the smoking rate among Thai police, the 100% smoke-free police station policy should be implemented. This policy aims to counsel police officers who currently smoke about nicotine withdrawal symptoms in the short term, and to alter behavior and attitude about smoking in the long term.

Keywords: Smoking, Police officers, Smoke-free police station

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Police officers are bound to serve the citizen according to the laws, including health-related laws, such as, Tobacco Products Control Act BE 2535 (1992) and Non-Smoker's Health Protection Act BE 2535 (1992). The Ministry of Public Health has declared public premises to be smoke-free. Consequently, people demand for "Smoke-Free Police Stations". The police's job is to serve people with knowledge, analytical thinking, care, and patience. Their official working hours are also somewhat different from other public officers. As a result, police practices induce

high stress; and police officers tend to have high smoking rate. Smoking affects health and results in premature deaths from cigarette-related diseases among police officers and their family members. Police General Hospital has jointly co-operated with Thai Health Professional Alliance Against Tobacco in this survey of the current smoking situation among Royal Thai Police officers in order to tackle smoking problems in the organization effectively.

Material and Method

20,000 questionnaires about smoking behavior, amount of cigarettes smoked per day, and staging of smoking cessation were distributed to 1) the Office of the Top Management, 2) every bureau nationwide,

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3) every division of any police bureau, 4) six biggest police stations from every division, and 5) three subdivisions from every division in supporting bureau. Some police departments excluded from this survey are Police General Hospital, Police Educational Bureau, Office of Inspector General, Police Cadet Academy, and Office of the Royal Court Security Police, between March and August 2008.

Results

During the five-month study period, 14,231 completed questionnaires were received. In this study, the sample size of 14,231 represents the entire 220,000 Thai police officers at the 95% confidence level and \pm 1% error. The population sample space has the ratio of female to male of 1 to 10, similar to that of the entire

police officers in Thailand. According to the survey, 30.9% of Thai police nationwide smoke.

Smoking is significantly associated with five main factors: gender, age, education level, rank, and line of work. The smoking rate is higher among male police officers than among female police officers. Specifically, 33.4% of male police officers smoke, while only 3.3% of female police officers do. Police officers falling into the 50-59 age category, with the highest education level of high school, or with low police rank have higher smoking rate than other officers. Moreover, the highest smoking rate among fields of police work is found among detectives (40.3%), followed by patrol police (35.6%) and traffic police (35.1%) (Table 1).

When categorized by organizational structure and location, there are five police groups: 1) headquarter

Table 1. Police officers' smoking rate categorized by gender, age, education level, rank and field of work

Item	Number (persons)	Smoking (persons)	%
Gender			
Male police officers	12,856	4,298	33.4
Female police officers	1,237	41	3.3
Overall police officers	14,231	4,369	30.9
Age			
20-29	1,072	279	26.0
30-39	5,584	1,678	30.0
40-49	4,857	1,530	31.5
50-59	2,213	710	32.1
Unknown or not specified	505	199	39.4
Education level			
High school	5,842	2,189	37.5
Certificates	1,736	569	32.8
Under graduate and Graduate	6,165	1,462	23.7
Others	268	96	35.8
Unknown or not specified	220	80	15.2
Rank			
Pol.Const.-Pol. Sgt.	2,559	845	33.0
Pol.Sgt.Maj.-Pol.Sen.Sgt.Maj.	9,638	3,085	32.0
Pol.Sub.Lt.-Pol.Capt.	1,015	228	22.5
Pol.Maj.-Pol.Lt.Col.	774	175	22.6
Pol.Col.-Pol.Col. (Special)	97	20	20.6
Pol.Maj.Gen.-Pol.Gen.	13	3	23.1
Unknown or not specified	135	40	29.6
Line of work			
Operational	5,509	1,292	23.5
Patrol	3,841	1,366	35.6
Traffic	1,395	490	35.1
Detectives	1,619	652	40.3
Investigation	977	310	31.7
Others	374	131	35.0
Unknown or not specified	516	155	30.0

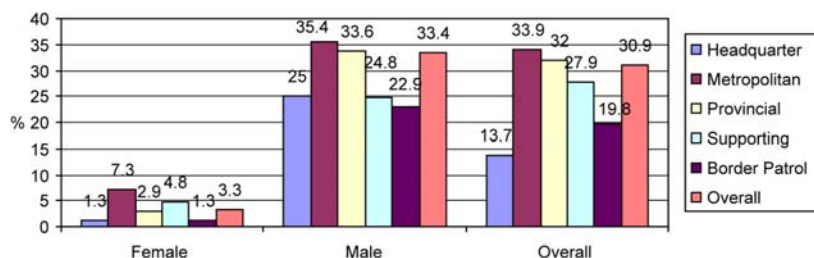


Fig. 1 Smoking rates in female, male, and overall police officers, categorized by organizational structure

(strategic apex and techno-structure), 2) operating core namely Metropolitan Police Bureau, 3) Provincial Police Bureau in nine regions, 4) Border Patrol Police Bureau, and 5) other supporting teams. The Metropolitan police have the highest smoking rate of 33.9%, followed by Provincial police in nine regions (32.0%), Supporting teams (27.9%), Border patrol police (19.8%), and Headquarter police (13.7%) (Fig. 1).

60.4% of police officers tried smoking before they started their police career. Most of these police officers started smoking at the age of 16 to 20 years old. The initiating rate of smoking gradually declines after beginning the police career and getting older, resulting in only 2.6% of the officers who start smoking at the age of 25 year older (Fig. 2). Of all the

officers who currently smoke, 42.1% admitted that they have been smoking more than 15 years (Table 2). Furthermore, 10.1% of the police officers who currently smoke are addicted to nicotine in the high level of more than 20 cigarettes per day (Table 2).

Of the police officers who currently smoke, 60.4% attempt to quit smoking at least once in a year (preparation stage), 24.4% think about quitting smoking (contemplation stage), and 8.6% will continue smoking (pre-contemplation stage). The preceding data is consistent with the finding that most police officers (84.7%) agree with the smoke-free workplace policy, which has already been implemented. If the 100% smoke-free police station policy is implemented, 76.0% of the police officers who currently smoke will support this campaign (Table 3).

Table 2. Smoking years, amount of cigarette per day and stage of smoking cessation of the current smoking police officers

Item	Number (persons)	%
Smoking years		
Less than 1 years	117	2.7
1-2 years	147	3.3
3-5 years	333	7.6
6-10 years	824	18.7
11-15 years	789	18.0
15+ years	1,851	42.1
Unknown	335	7.6
Amount of cigarette per day		
10+ cigarettes	2,110	48.0
11-20 cigarettes	1,496	34.0
21-30 cigarettes	339	7.7
31+ cigarettes	105	2.4
Unknown	346	7.9
Staging of smoking cessation		
Attempt to quit smoking for at least once in a year (preparation)	2,654	60.4
Wish to quit smoking (contemplation)	1,071	24.4
Continue smoking (pre-contemplation)	376	8.6
Unknown	295	6.7

Table 3. Police officers and smoke free workplace policy

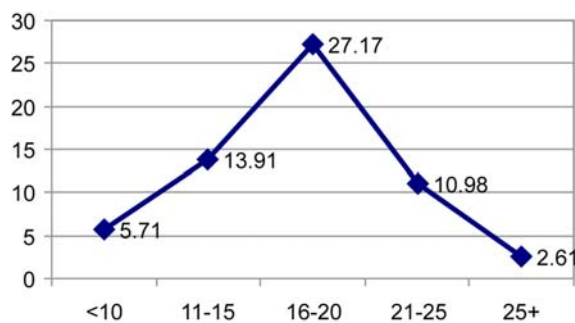
Item	Number (persons)	%
Police officers agree with smoke-free police stations	12,053	84.7
Disagree	1,453	10.2
Unknown	725	5.1
Smoking officers agree with smoke-free police station	3,341	76.0
Disagree	747	17.0
Unknown	308	7.0
If 100% smoke-free police stations are premised		
Continue smoking	607	13.8
Will smoke in less amount of cigarette	1,330	30.3
Require cessation counseling	682	15.5
Will quit smoking by themselves	1,450	33.0
Unknown	327	7.4

Discussion

The smoking rate of Thai police (30.9%) is higher than the average smoking rate of Thai population (21.2%). The smoking rate of female police officers (3.3%) is also higher than the average smoking rate of Thai female population (1.9%). However, male police officers have less smoking rate (33.4%) than Thai male population (41.7%) (Fig. 3). When compared among the same level of education, police officers' smoking rate is higher than that of the general Thai population and Thai males (Fig. 4).

Cigarettes contain nicotine, which induces higher demand of smoking. Police officers who currently smoke have been smoking for a long time, proportional to their police service years. This study finds that only 10.1% of the police officers who currently smoke are addicted to nicotine in the high level of more than 20 cigarettes per day and that most police officers who smoke are in the preparation stage of quitting cigarettes. These findings may result from the implementation of the smoke-free workplace policy, which has effectively been in place in Thailand for more than 15 years.

The smoke-free workplace policy consists of enriching people's knowledge about harm from smoking and about secondary smoking. Health-related diseases of primary and secondary smoking are high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart diseases, which currently are health problems of Thai police. Therefore, most police officers agree with the smoke-free workplace policy. 100% smoke-free police station program and well-planned cessation policies might help setting new norms and social values on smoking, which will induce police officers to quit smoking. Support and

**Fig. 2** Police officers' age when started smoking

encouragement from commanders and medical staffs will make the cessation possible and effective.

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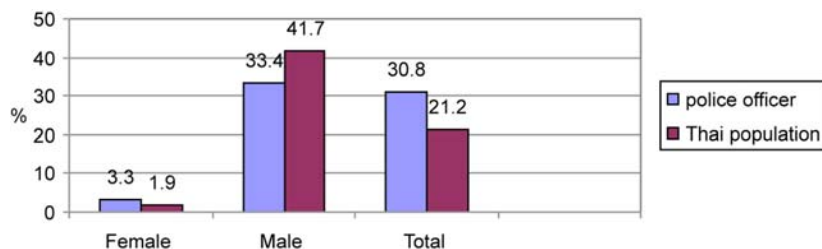


Fig. 3 The Smoking officers (2008) compared to general Thai population (2007)

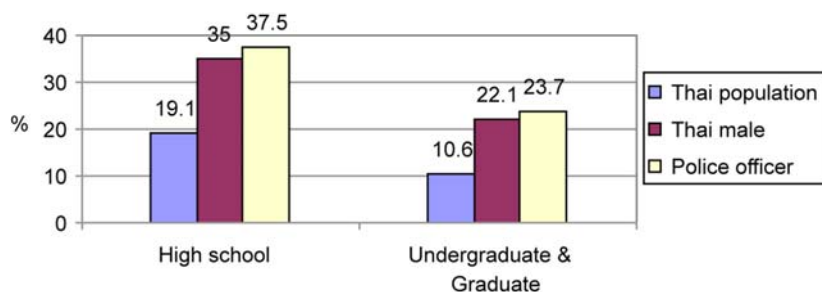


Fig. 4 High school certificates or undergraduate degree in Thai police officers compared with the general Thai population and Thai male

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การสำรวจสถานการณ์การสูบบุหรี่ในสำนักงานตำรวจแห่งชาติ

จันทนา วิธวาศิริ, สมศรี เผ่าสวัสดิ์

วัตถุประสงค์: เพื่อศึกษาสถานการณ์การสูบบุหรี่ของข้าราชการตำรวจในสำนักงานตำรวจแห่งชาติ

วัสดุและวิธีการ: สำรวจโดยแบบสอบถามข้อมูลการสูบบุหรี่ ปริมาณการสูบบุหรี่ต่อวัน ระดับการเลิกบุหรี่ ความเห็นต่อนโยบายสุขภาพเรื่องบุหรี่ ใช้แบบสอบถาม 20,000 ฉบับ ส่งไปยัง (1) สำนักงานผู้บังคับบัญชาระดับสูงของตำรวจ (2) ทุกกองบัญชาการ (3) ทุกกองบังคับการในสังกัดกองบัญชาการและ (4) สถานีตำรวจ 6 แห่ง ในทุกกองบังคับการ (5) กองกำกับการ 3 แห่ง ในทุกกองบังคับการ โดยเรียงลำดับจากขนาดใหญ่ลงมา เว้นโรงพยาบาลตำรวจ สำนักงานนายตำรวจราชสำนักประจำ โรงเรียนนายร้อยตำรวจ กองบัญชาการการศึกษา และสำนักงานจเรตำรวจ เพื่อให้ตำรวจในสังกัดตอบแบบสอบถามในระหว่างมีนาคม - สิงหาคม พ.ศ. 2551

ผลการศึกษา: ในระยะเวลา 5 เดือน ได้รับแบบสอบถามทั้งสิ้น 14,231 ฉบับ พบว่าตำรวจไทยสูบบุหรี่ร้อยละ 30.9 ร้อยละ 33.4 ของตำรวจชายสูบบุหรี่ และร้อยละ 3.3 ของตำรวจหญิงสูบบุหรี่โดยหน่วยปฏิบัติงานหลัก กองบัญชาการตำรวจนครบาล มีอัตราตำรวจสูบบุหรี่มากที่สุดร้อยละ 33.9 งานสายสืบเป็นลักษณะงานที่ตำรวจสูบบุหรี่มากที่สุด ร้อยละ 40.3 ตำรวจที่สูบบุหรี่ติดนิโคตินในระดับมากหรือสูบบุหรี่เกินกว่าวันละ 20 มวนร้อยละ 10.1 และเคยเลิกบุหรี่ด้วยตนเองตั้งแต่หนึ่งครั้งขึ้นไปในรอบปีที่ผ่านมาร้อยละ 60.4 ส่วนความเห็นต่อนโยบายสุขภาพเรื่องบุหรือนั้น ตำรวจในสำนักงานตำรวจแห่งชาติเห็นชอบร้อยละ 84.7 และถ้ากำหนดให้โรงพักปลอดบุหรี่ 100% ตำรวจที่สูบบุหรี่ก็ยังไม่เห็นชอบด้วยร้อยละ 76

สรุป: อัตราการสูบบุหรี่ของตำรวจไทยมากกว่าอัตราการสูบบุหรี่ของประชากรไทย การลดจำนวนตำรวจที่สูบบุหรี่อาจทำได้โดยโครงการโรงพักปลอดบุหรี่ 100% ระยะแรกมีที่ปรึกษาลดอาการถอนนิโคติน พร้อมกับรวมกันปรับพฤติกรรม และสร้างค่านิยมของตำรวจไทยยุคใหม่ที่ไม่สูบบุหรี่