

Thai Health

2006

FACING THE CHALLENGE OF BIRD FLU

13 Health Indicators
10 + 10 Health Issues



**Thai
Health
2006**

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Preface

This is the third issue of the **Thai Health Report**. This issue has been produced by the same hard-working team that produced the first two reports and follows the same format. In this issue, however, the role of external experts has been increased. Some entries in the Health Indicators section were written by external contributors; the names of the contributors are given under the title of the entries. We are very grateful for these people's assistance. The special topic for this issue is bird flu. Bird flu remains a major problem for Thailand and the rest of the region, and has recently spread into other regions. Experts on many different aspects of bird flu wrote summaries from the perspectives of their particular fields, which were synthesized by the Thai Health Report team. We have attempted to make the discussion as accessible as possible to non-experts. In doing so, we have had to omit some material of a more technical nature. We plan to issue a small companion volume that will include the omitted material and help disseminate knowledge about bird flu.

The Thai Health Report 2006 contains three main sections.

Section 1, Health Indicators, this year has 13 entries. Two entries deal with physical aspects of health: dental health and sexual health. Three entries deal with determinants of health: nutrition, alcohol, and exercise. There are entries discussing Thailand's universal health care system, mental health, and spiritual health. There are also six entries discussing various aspects of social health: water shortages, traffic accidents, television versus school, family life, and pesticides.

Section 2, 10+10 Issues Currently Affecting the Health of Thais, discusses selected issues arising over the past year and their effect on people's health.

Ten Issues in 2005-2006

The Crisis in Southern Thailand: The National Reconciliation
Commission and the Emergency Decree

Do we let television determine the future of Thai children

The High Price of Oil and the Search for Energy Security

Patients Suing Doctors: Jeopardizing the Doctor-Patient Relationship

Instant Credit Services and Their Tricks

What Does the Public Gain from Privatization?

Health Impacts of the Tsunami

Pregnancy, Abortion, and Child Abandonment: Neglected Problems
The Continuing Struggle Against Alcohol and Tobacco
The Consumers' Association: Another Step Forward for Thai
Consumer Power

An additional ten issues are discussed very briefly: pollution in Bangkok; droughts and floods; suicide; reforming the thirty baht health insurance scheme; dengue fever; motorbike racing gangs; sustainable agriculture; the "disease" of inhumanity; increases in the incidence of HIV/AIDS among Thai teenagers; and work-related illnesses.

Topics for the 10+10 Issues were selected through an extensive consultation process. The Thai Health Report team sought suggestions from researchers, health workers, and members of the general public. Altogether, there were six rounds of consultation, involving 770 people.

Section 3 presents this year's **special topic: "Facing the Challenge of Bird Flu"**

Bird flu has been a major public concern in Thailand, and will continue to be so for many years. As well as being a direct threat to people's health, bird flu has affected the poultry industry, international public health cooperation, the economy, society, and Thai people's way of life. Although it will be very difficult to avoid bird flu, we can nevertheless seek ways to protect ourselves from an epidemic. We can, for instance, reduce the opportunities for the virus to evolve rapidly. Success will depend on an appropriate policy response, and changes to farming practices.

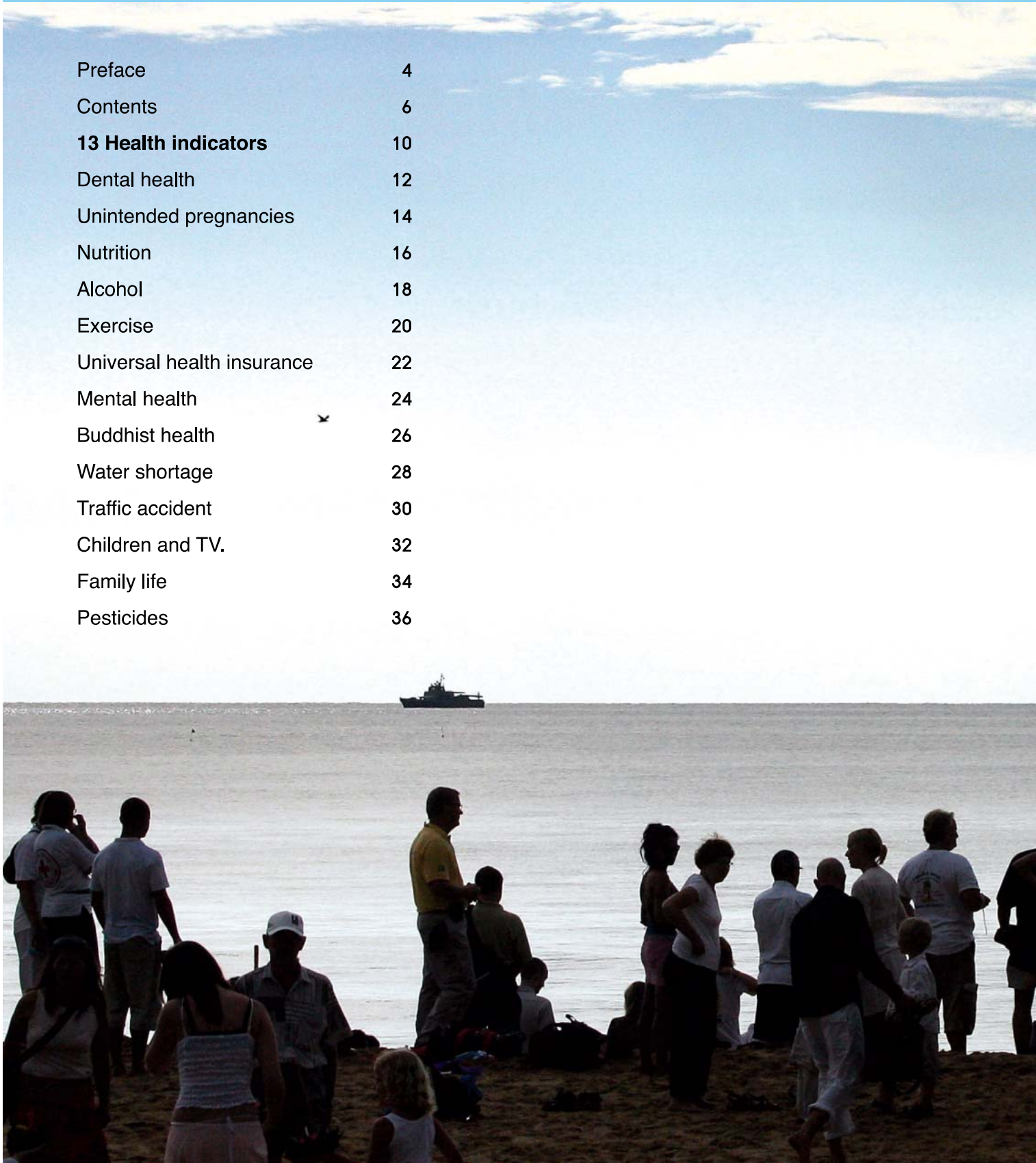
Two thousand copies of the English-language version of last year's Thai Health Report have been distributed at international health conferences. Many delegates attending the conferences would like to use the Thai Health Report as a model for disseminating health information in their own countries. The Thai Health Report has been a very successful export.

The Thai Health Report team is grateful for the many comments and suggestions it has received from readers. Input from readers helps enormously in the preparation of the report.

Choose wisely Choose health

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