

Looking for a Needle in the Haystack: Knowledge of Health and Medical Angles Communicated in Thai Television Dramas

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Abstract

People are exposed to a drama or *lakorn* [Thai literacy] because it makes them entertained and releases them from fatigue and boredom. While watching a drama, as an audience, apart from entertainment received, knowledge on an issue, especially health and medical communication and attitude and behavioural change are intervened and should be taken into consideration. However, the latter is difficult and time-consuming to measure; hence, the former is just of the interest of this study. That is to say, the research paper examined what dimensions of understanding on health and medical angles were addressed. It also made a comparison between what was aired on television and what was revealed in academic profession so that either possibility or impossibility was acknowledged. Six prime-time *lakorns* were used as case studies. The targets were achieved by qualitative content analysis and later conducting an interview with a nurse and employing additional documentary archives. According to the study's outcomes, nine health and medical issues, i.e. contraception, loss of memory, drug addiction, obesity, malaria, stress-related diseases, cancer, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and nutrition and diseases were primarily highlighted. The research revealed that a more and clearer detail was mostly needed. Possible information was given in a greater extent than the impossible one and the one found impossible could hardly be discovered, though. This study suggested health and medical professionals as well as public relations ones a way of how to design and produce a health and medical communication scheme effectively. Furthermore, if understanding on health and medical matters communicated through television as a mass medium is found fault, that is to say, that will lead the mass audience to misunderstanding on as such, which they are placed in danger.

Keywords: Knowledge of Health and Medical Communication, Thai Television Dramas, Entertainment, Health and Medical Communication Scheme

1. Introduction

Healthcare is concerned by the people so that they can live longer, with being healthy and in a good physical condition. Many health and medical organisations concerning have designed and launched communication programmes and campaigns, in the most effective with raising people's awareness and amend their attitude and behaviour. If it is possible, television, as a mass medium is selected as the health and medical communication channel. In consideration

of a variety of programmes available on television, a drama or *lakorn* [Thai Literacy] is one of the most popular programmes. Its main aim is to make the audience entertained. Within it, some knowledge is projected, especially health and medical communication because some characters have to be affected by a cause. As a result of this, it is questioned whether or not such understanding is communicated possibly and precisely. This leads to paying attention to conduct this research.

2. Objectives

1) To examine what dimensions of understanding on health and medical angles were addressed.

2) To make a comparison between what was aired on television and what was revealed in academic profession.

3. Research Questions

1) What kind of health and medical knowledge is communicated in the dramas studied?

2) Is there the possibility of what is aired on television, compared to what is revealed in academic profession?

4. Literature Review

The Government Public Relations Department, Foreign Office (n.d.) accepted television “as the most influential medium”. It can be enumerated and reasoned that television is described as people’s best friend because “the television set is turned on casually and the audience is inevitably surrounded by diverse programs and their explicit and implicit [educational and entertaining] messages” (Güven, 2011, p.70) and it brings family-oriented activities (p.74). It is not different from Australian society (Lawrence, 2008, p.122), when Thais are more exposed to television than listening to radio and reading newspapers (National Statistical Office [NSO], Thailand, 2008). Manchainimitri (2010) referring to the statistics presented by Economic Intelligence Center, Siam Commercial Bank indicated that a number of television sets vary, according to a level of household income, i.e. the poorer people are, the fewer they have television sets. While more than 2 sets are for those whose household incomes are over 25,000 THB, otherwise, for those who have lower than 5,000 THB, only one is occupied (Manchainimitri, 2010). The current statistics also revealed that, naturally, entertainment outnumbered news 1.5 to 1 and, following this, Thai people fancy knowledge, commentary, education, and advertisement programmes, respectively (NSO, Thailand, 2008).

Evidence, likewise, states that “what do Thais do after a tedious day at work? Simple! They hurriedly scamper home to watch their favourite lakorn. Such dramas are pure social realism at its best, and as such reflect the true life of every Thai. They say that life imitates art, which is lucky because this art has more knowledge and morality than you could shake a monk’s robe at. We can learn that if you are handsome you can do what you want, that if you are rich

you can act like you are the ruler of the universe and that if you are young, beautiful and luk krung you will definitely get laid” (Anonymous, 2012). From the statement, due to Thais’ routine lives, being exposed to the entertainment genre, like watching a drama makes them fresh and fun. *Lakorns*, furthermore, project how Thais culturally behave and believe. Discussion and argument will be likely to emerge if there is something communicated accurately or wrongly, furthermore. Hence, both entertainment and education are concerned by the audience. In health and medical communication, in particular, television dramas are used as the important channel for health awareness and promotion (Matelski, 2010, p.186) and family relationship (Auter et al., 2010, p.20; Güven, 2011, p.78).

5. Research Methodology

Eleven dramas were aired on prime-time, Fridays to Sundays, for a six-month period, i.e. between July, 2011 and January, 2012. Also, six dramas came from Thai TV Colour Channel 3- *Sèup S□an Bpùan Gamlang 3*, *Plerng Torránong*, *Dtàwan Dèuat*, *Roi Maan*, *Gaym Ráai Gaym Rák*, and *Saam Nùm Néua Tong*¹ and the other five ones were broadcasted on BBTV Channel 7- *Lílee See GùLàap*, *Naangsaao Jamlaeng Rák*, *Nai Roi Rák*, *Sao 5 Táptim Sàyaam* Episode, and *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia*.² These two channels have occupied the highest shares of the entertainment market and they are competitive. Manchainimitri (2010) pointed out that, in both years of 2009 and 2010, levels of rating of Channel 7 (i.e., 4.3 and 3.6 respectively) outnumbered that of its counterpart (i.e., 2.5 and 2.6 respectively). It can also be reasoned that the most updated and completed dramas were selected. Almost all of the dramas in year 2011 mentioned in a Thai well-known newspaper (4 of 8 *lakorns*) and that could attract audiences, for Channel 3, were the ones that were listed above, i.e. *Plerng Torránong*, *Dtàwan Dèuat*, *Roi Maan*, and *Gaym Ráai Gaym Rák* (*Lakorns of the year, 2011, 2011*). Of 13 Channel 7 *lakorns* having the top levels of rating, five each were broadcasted on Wednesdays and Thursdays and Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, whereas the other three went to Mondays and Tuesdays (*Channel 7 lakorns of the year, 2011, “Bpàa Naang Seua” wins, 2011*). In consideration of being the most contemporary, Wednesdays and Thursdays were hit by Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays at the ratio 1:2. On Channel 3, *Sèup S□an Bpùan Gamlang 3* was, however, excluded, mainly, because it was not one of the 4+1 Project series.³ Of all, there were only six dramas whose television plays were fully available on Manager Online (2012, 2011). The Manager website claimed that there was agreement between what is published on the website and what is broadcasted

¹ The periods of broadcasting were checked on Thai TV Colour Channel 3 (n.d.).

² The periods of broadcasting were checked on wikipedia (2012).

³ The 4+1 Project is a Channel 3 project that aimed to promote the five popular *Prá Áyks* [a good, maim male character], i.e. Mario Maurer, Parin Supharat, Pakorn Chatborirak, Pupoom Pongpanu, and Nadech Kukimiya (*Channel 3 discloses outstanding lakorns in Perd Vig Big 3, 2011*).

because it buys copyrights from a novelist and a playwright, unfortunately, the television plays have just been available online, since 29 August 2011 (*Manager buys Channel 3 dramas' copyrights to provide to readers, it starts from 29 August with Kol Ruk Luang Jai*, 2011). Within the period of time, as a result, the six dramas: *Roi Maan*, *Gaym Ráai Gaym Rák*, *Saam Nùm Néua Tong*, *Nai Roi Rák*, *Sao 5 Táptim Sàyaam* Episode, and *Naangfáa Gàp Maafia* were included. The main purpose of being exposed to the plays online was that the health and medical issues were clearly written. After reading the plays on the website, these dramas were later watched on Youtube (2012, 2011) so that both visual and audio factors aired were ensured. In terms of examining what kind of health and medical issues communicated in the dramas, qualitative content analysis was, therefore, employed in the study. That is to say, because this study was the qualitative research searching for what kind of health and medical issues communicated in the dramas only, no statistics were used in this study. In other words, not a number of content, but content itself was sought for and scrutinised. Because of this reason and for the purpose of making a comparison between what was broadcasted and what was revealed in academic profession, I, as the researcher analysed the content of the dramas by myself, through reading the plays on Manager Online several times, checking the facts on Youtube, coding, and finding a theme. In order to get the result if what was broadcasted was possible or impossible, it was checked by an interview with a professional nurse⁴ and from health and medical documents available. This article was reviewed by a committee and peers.

6. Results

There were two sections under the findings of the study. It started from giving how the dramas were plotted. Next, the analysis of what was aired on the *lakorns* and how the nurse and health and medical documents responded to such data were placed.

Summary of the *lakorns'* plots

By analysing and drawing upon a classical model of drama plots, a story normally started from exposition, point of attack, crisis, climax, and, finally, a resolution.⁵ In the exposition, the playwrights similarly built a situation to bring over *Prá Àyk*⁶ and *Naang Àyk*⁷ to meet each other

⁴ Anonymity and right of privacy was highly respected. As requested, therefore, the nurse's name and details were kept securely and not presented in this study.

⁵ The source of the classical model for drama plots came from a lecture given by Ajarn Danaya Subying, a professional, experiential playwright in CA102: Communicative Writing module on Friday 17 February 2012 at rooms 343 and 344, Floor 4, Building 3, Bangkok University, Rangsit Campus.

⁶ *Prá Àyk* is a good, main male character.

⁷ *Naang Àyk* is a good, main female character.

for the first time. There were two distinguished exceptions of *Roi Maan* and *Sao 5 Táptim Sàyaam* Episode. In the former drama, the opening scene presented the current position, i.e. holding an arranged marriage for *Prá Àyk* and *Naang Àyk* to replace an actual bride of *Prá Àyk* and a flashback was given afterward. Hence, they had seen each other before. For *Sao 5 Táptim Sàyaam* Episode, also, there was a previous meeting between the members of *Sao 5* in the previous episode. Half of the meetings between *Prá Àyk* and *Naang Àyk* were in a bad direction whereas the rest of them were in the opposite one. The story developed, during the stages of the point of attack and the crisis could be made into two distinctions, following the types of dramas, in this study, love-based story and investigation-based story. The love-based stories, including *Roi Maan*, *Gaym Ráai Gaym Rák*, *Saam Nùm Néua Tong*, and *Nai Roi Rák* were plotted as the love relationships between *Prá Àyk* and *Naang Àyk* were interrupted by a *Pôo Ráai*⁸ and/or *Naang Ráai*.⁹ Or, simply speaking, it was so-called a love triangle. Even happening in the investigation-based stories covering *Sao 5 Táptim Sàyaam Episode* and *Naangfáa Gàp Maafia*, a smaller number of the love triangles were possibly revealed than of investigations and attacks. The unsurprising climax was more likely to be uncovered in the three Channel 3 dramas than their counterparts since a *Pôo Ráai*'s and/or *Naang Ráai*'s character was apparently, continuously shown. Rather differently, some truth was covert or doubt might emerge for the three *lakorns* of Channel 7. Finally, the Thai *lakorns* enclosed the same resolution outcome, i.e. the retreat of *Pôo Ráai* and/or *Naang Ráai* and the happy ending between *Prá Àyk* and *Naang Àyk*.

A Comparison between What was Aired on Television and What was Revealed in Academic Profession

The health and medical issues which were communicated on the television dramas and the results from making a comparison between what was aired on the television and what was revealed by the nurse and health and medical documents were briefly presented in Table 1. The explanations were later given under the table.

⁸ *Pôo Ráai* is a bad male character.

⁹ *Naang Ráai* is a bad female character.

Table 1: Summary of the health and medical perspectives communicated in the *lakorns* and source of evidence for making the comparisons

Drama / factor	Channel 3			Channel 7			Result (✓ = Possible) (x = Impossible) (≠ = More & clearer information needed)	Conducting the interview	Sources of evidence for comparisons between what was aired on television and what was revealed in academic profession	
	Roi Maan	Gaym Rai Rai Gaym Rak	Saam Num Neua Tong	Nai Roi Rak	Sao 5 Taptim Sayam Episode	Nangfaa Gap Maqfa			Source (s) of documents available (respectively)	
Contraception	♥	♥	♥	♥		♥	✓/x/≠	<input type="checkbox"/>	AVERT (2011); WHO (2012); Abasiubong, Udoh, Ntuk, Ekanem and Etukumana (2011); Exavery, Lutambi, Mubyazi, Kweka, Mbaruku and Masanja (2011); Lewis, Kaysen, Rees and Woods (2010); Nobelius, Kalina, Pool, Whitworth, Chesters and Power (2012); Santhya, Archarya and Jejeebhoy. (2011); Tung, Cook and Lu (2011); Browne, Wechsberg, Bowling and Luseno (2012); Ehrle and Sarker (2011); Everett (2011); Mir and Malik (2010); Szűcs, Szűcs and Bártfai (2010); Beaulieu, Kools, Kennedy and Humphreys (2011)	
Loss of memory		♥		♥			✓/x	<input type="checkbox"/>	Darton (2010)	
Drug addiction					♥	♥	✓/≠	<input type="checkbox"/>	NSW Government (2011); WHO (n.d.); Dugdale (2010)	

(Table to be continued)

Table 1 (continued): Summary of the health and medical perspectives communicated in the *lakorns* and source of evidence for making the comparisons

Drama / factor	Channel 3			Channel 7			Result (√ = Possible) (x = Impossible) (≠ = More & clearer information needed)	Sources of evidence for comparisons between what was aired on television and what was revealed in academic profession
	Roi Maan	Gaym Rai Gaym Rak	Saam Num Neua Tong	Nai Roi Rak	Sao 5 Taptim Saryam Episode	Nangfaa Gap Maqfa		
Cancer	♥					♥	√/≠	Department of Radiation and Cancer, Faculty of Medical Science, Chulalongkorn University (n.d.)
Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)		♥				♥	√/≠	The Heart Association of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of HM the King (n.d.)
Nutrition and diseases		♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	√/≠	CDC (2011); Chomprach and Yonchaitrakul (n.d.); Ministry of Public Health (2003); Pradines, Pistone, Ezzedine, Briolant, Bertaux, Receveur, Parzy, Millet, Rogier and Malvy (2010); WHO (2010b); Aguwa, Ukwe and Adibe (2010); Kyu and Fernández (2009); Achan, Talisuna, Erhart, Yeka, Tibenderana, Baliraine, Rosenthal and D'Alessandro (2011); Subcharoen and Tangsukruethai (2001)

Table 1 displayed that there were nine subjects on health and medical angles mainly communicated in the television dramas- contraception, loss of memory, drug addiction, obesity, malaria, stress-related diseases, cancer, CPR, and nutrition and diseases. Additional and more obvious information was, above all, called for so that the ultimate goal, best and correct understanding of such matters was reached. Compared between feasible and infeasible facts, a much lesser quantity was given in the impossible information than the possible one. Or, simply speaking, there was a scarce source of impossible information. The results from making the comparisons were drawn upon conducting with the nurse and a wide range of relevant documents.

Contraception

Included in contraception, there were general sexual intercourse, condom use, birth control pill, and pregnancy test. The majority of the information shown on the Thai television dramas was found possible. However, further information should be provided. Especially in *Saam Nùm Néua Tong*, a *Prá Àyk* was characterised as a playboy who had sexual relations with his partners. Despite being unclear, in *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia*, homosexual was presented, likewise. One matter that was not presented in the drama was that, these characters were perceived as higher-risk-behaviour individuals if they did not use a condom to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) because no one could tell how safe their partners were. Condom use is the best way to safe a person from any disease regarding having sex and pregnancy, as the latter was truly exhibited in *Roi Maan* and *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia*, according to the interview with the nurse, AVERT (2011), and World Health Organization [WHO] (2012). I agreed with what she further said, the situation of the playwrights, the limitation of media presentation on a sexual issue, and pointing out the way for the villain (adolescents, in particular) were understood. For instance, in *Roi Maan*, holding a condom was apparently shown. However, a mosaic picture of a condom was given, but the word “condom” was clearly said, in *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia*. Like the nurse’s experiential viewpoint, the problems of sexual relations prior to a marriage leading to higher rates of unwanted pregnancy and abortion, are parents do not dare to teach their children and parents are not a good role model because of their bad behaviour. The less the information of it is uncovered, nonetheless, the less understanding of it, especially among teenagers is raised. Together with the two points mentioned above, it would not be abnormal if unwanted pregnancy was the result, even having sex only once. There are two rationales the key informant explained. On the one hand, it depends upon contraceptive method. On the other hand, a small error is possibly found in condom use, which three factors are reasoned- its wrong use (i.e., either having reservoir-ended or having not, re-use), wrong removal (i.e., the need of a tissue paper when removal, taking it away not allowed in a delivery room), and inappropriate storage (i.e., its leak due to sitting on it and being scratched by a nail) (see more details in AVERT, 2011). In different countries, several studies’ findings suggested the requirement of condom promotion among teenagers (Abasiubong, Udoh, Ntuk, Ekanem and

Etukumana, 2011; Exavery, Lutambi, Mubyazi, Kweka, Mbaruku and Masanja, 2011; Lewis, Kaysen, Rees and Woods, 2010; Nobelius, Kalina, Pool, Whitworth, Chesters and Power, 2012; Santhya, Archarya and Jejeebhoy, 2011; Tung, Cook and Lu, 2011) and the teaching on how to use a condom among women (Browne, Wechsberg, Bowling and Luseno, 2012).

Especially communicated in *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia*, both possible and more information needed for birth control pill were the result. According to the nurse, what was feasible was birth control pill was the way to avoid unwanted pregnancy. The story further told the audience that she presumably took the medicine at that time, i.e. about a day after a day (24 hours) after *Naang Áyk* assumed that she had sexual intercourse with *Prá Áyk*. If so, in accordance with the nurse, her behaviour was possible to be against pregnancy. However, some information about it was gone missing. The key informant presupposed that the one that *Naang Áyk* was taking was emergency contraceptive pills (morning after pill)- there are two pills a pack and 750 micrograms are contained in a tablet of emergency contraceptives, which is 10 times higher than general birth control pills (i.e., 50-75 micrograms a pill). Because its power, it is suggested not to take more than twice a month. Taking it about a day later post to having sex with someone is alright, since it is recommended to take the first tablet within the first 72 hours after having the sexual activity. Apart from this, the second tablet is compulsory by 24 hours after the first one. It is noted by the nurse that, in fact, if it is taken after two to three days, there is a higher risk of pregnancy. The US Food and Drug Administration (2011) proclaimed that, the quicker the first pill is taken, the less the risk of pregnancy is perceived, i.e., about 15 per cent will be left for getting pregnancy unless the first table is eaten within three days. Not only in Thailand, the outcomes of several studies from different countries were also called for the more teaching on emergency contraceptive pills among clients (Ehrle & Sarker, 2011; Everett, 2011; Mir & Malik, 2010) and those who distribute medicines (Szücs, Székelysi, & Bártfai, 2010), and more knowledge on how to communicate this with adolescents (Beaulieu, Kools, Kennedy and Humphreys, 2011).

Having a child could also be acknowledged by a pregnancy test toolkit, as given in *Saam Nùm Néua Tong* and *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia*. Especially, in *Saam Nùm Néua Tong*, finally, it was half-possibility for the pregnancy test toolkit. It was exact that if one is not pregnant, the result on the test would be minus. Subsequent to the interview with the nurse, however, two points were highlighted and questioned because the information presented in the drama was unclear. First, the test is most appropriate for using with those whose menstrual cycle is normal. In relation to this, second, whether or not she is pregnant is needed to wait for one and a half month. For example, a woman has her period every 15th. In the meantime, she has sex with someone this month (March). To test whether or not she is going to have a child, she has to wait until 30 March (one menstrual cycle: February-March plus two weeks). It was impossible to test right after, i.e. either a day after or a couple of days after having sexual intercourse or after a couple of days after having no period, as it displayed in this drama. It can be concluded that all possible, impossible, and missing information was considered in this issue.

Loss of Memory

Two topics which were not excluded were children behaviour and memory recovery. Despite being different from the accidents affected- the accident in the sea in *Gaym Ráai Gaym Rák* and physical harassment in *Nai Roi Rák*, they had the same result which was brain effected in the means of memory loss. According to the nurse, there would be the feasibility if memory of a period could be lost. However, she argued that it might be impossible to have this happen, i.e. *Naang Áyk*'s behaviour presented in *Gaym Ráai Gaym Rák* was at the early year of age was shown. These two *lakorns* were feasible when the conversations saying that a patient's memory could be recovered by letting him/her to be surrounded and maintained by environment and practice in status quo, and listened to a story as ever heard before. In contrast to this, as explained in *Gaym Ráai Gaym Rák*, the electric shock therapy or electroconvulsion therapy was used for the purpose of a current memory loss. According to the nurse, this could not be possible. She, conversely, clarified that, this method is used in psychiatry, i.e. to be utilised for those who have mental, aggressive behaviour because it helps so-called synchronising one's brainwave (see more information on Darton, 2010). It was not a memory discovery. Together with a medicine taken, once or twice is needed for these people. Similar to the interviewee, most of the information gathered recalled that the electric shock therapy does not make the forgetfulness.

Drug Addiction

Although there was the difference in the type of drug, i.e. an herb making one was addicted, for *Sao 5 Táptim Sàyaam* Episode and a drug, let say, ice or amphetamines¹⁰, in *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia*, both dramas showed the similar symptoms of those who were addicted to drugs, i.e. being blurred and uneasiness. The dialogues given in *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia* obviously showed that taking ice releases stress. Its later signs were tipsy, semiconscious, warm, antsy, and senseless. It would be possible to have these symptoms happen for those who take drugs and those who are addicted to them. Apart from speed and base, ice is a form of methamphetamine whose outcomes vary in "how much you take and how pure it is", "your height and weight", "your general health", "your mood", "your past experience with speed", "whether you use methamphetamine on its own or with other drugs", "whether you use alone or with others, at home or at a party", and so forth (NSW Government, 2011), nonetheless. Analysing from the two situations in the drama, even being unclear for other considerations, ice was taken, so, compared to base, ice contains an extreme greater number of influences than base (NSW Government, 2011) and, therefore, the claims about its effectiveness and symptoms displayed were approved. That is to say, NSW Government (2011) explained the fact that,

¹⁰ As broadcasted, it was a white, transparent capsule. However, it was clearly stated in Manager Online (2012, 2011), that is was ice.

such people could “feel very good and confident”, “feel alert and energetic”, “be excited or agitated”, “talk a lot”, “feel aggressive”, “feel anxious or panicky”, and take more risks than usual” (see more information on WHO, n.d.).

Three more characteristics of the bean heads being observable were that, as shown in the *lakorn*, they are suspicious, they are lacking disciplines and cleanliness, and, in case of using a needle, evidence resulting from the use of needle is found inside part of the arm, a hip, and a shoulder and they normally wear a long-sleeve shirt. As confirmed by the nurse interviewed and, especially Dugdale (2010) elucidating that those who have drug addiction partly have the inability to think or thinking in a variety of ways, no regular class or working attendance and ineffective outcomes produced, a smaller amount of food taken, deficiency in being well-dressed, and “secretive behavior to hide drug use” (Dugdale, 2010). In fact, not only three, but there are also other characteristics, such as regular drug use, even in society or at home, or with or without others and regular alcohol consumption, blaming surrounding factors to let one addicting to drug use, having aggressive behaviour, participation in social business rejected, and being hot-tempered when talking about drug use (Dugdale, 2010).

Obesity

The inclusions of the issue were diet pills and exercise. In general, feasibility was on a basis. More detailed information was requested, though. In the beginning of *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia*, its *Naang Áyk* was encountering many problems including a lady who has received side effects, i.e. having a pale face, having a stomach ache, and being weak from taking diet pills. These symptoms possibly happened. The key informant, however, clarified that it impinges upon what kind of diet pills she was taking, whether it has an effect on nerve and how well a person is. She further demonstrated that there are three kinds of the diet pills. First is a kind of a pill affecting brain which makes an individual unwell and blurred. In contrast to the first type, no effect on brain was provided. The last one is the pills which stimulates water release and that leads to fatigue and exhaustion. Quite similarly, according to Food and Drug Administration [FDA] (n.d.), diet pills are separated into two types varying in where the pills have effects on, i.e. catecholamine pathways and serotonin pathways. Within nerve system, the catecholamine pathways including amfepramone, phentermine, mazindol, cathine, and phenylpropanolamine lowers down the need of food consumption. Outside nerve system, in contrast, prohibition to absorb nutritional substances at intestine is the responsibility of serotonin pathways covering fenfluramine and dexfenfluramine (FDA, n.d.). It could be possible that, for this case, she was taking the first type of diet pills, which are widely used and whose side effects were as similar as presented, i.e. having insomnia, headache, high-blood pressure, uneasiness, fast heartbeats, yoyo effect, dried mouth, vomiting, constipation, sweats, excite, larger pupils, hallucination, high fever, chest pain, failure of blood circulation, convulsion, coma, and, finally, death, according to Dr Chatri Banchuen, Secretary General, FDA (*FDA warns long-term diet pills make yoyo effects, hallucination*, 2008). Along with this, taking diet pills should be counselled with professionals (Celio, Luce, Bryson, Winzelberg, Cuning, Rockwell, Doyle, Wilfley and Taylor, 2006).

It would be difficult to say that exercise could avoid fatness. On the one hand, it could be feasible. On the other hand, two factors are obstructing the effectiveness of exercise, i.e. how much heavy one is playing and how long he is playing, following the key informant. As shown in *Saam Nùm Néua Tong*, three characters said that they were not afraid of being fat because of their loveliness of exercises, i.e. presumably, playing a small amount of basketball, two-hour jogging, and unidentified physical activity although the one was eating wide rice noodles with barbecued pork, clean soup with vegetables and meat, clean soup with vegetables, and crackling, and the other one was having rice with barbecued pork and a whole portion of much-fat crispy pork. And no information was given for the last case. From these cases, however, it was unclear. If whatever he and she ate is burnt, varying from the type of sport they are playing and the period of playing, it is possible for them not to become fat. Nonetheless, if fat is not completely burnt, it will be possible to be accumulated. The important basic factors for exercise are, likewise, amount of exercise, duration, intensity, type, and frequency (e.g., US Department of Health and Human Services, 1999; WHO, 2010a, p.7). Therefore, what was said in the *lakorn* could emerge or could not.

Yoga could be another way for good exercise and also the approach of letting someone free, as clearly communicated in *Saam Nùm Néua Tong*, but very little in *Naangfáa Gáp Maafia*. It is strictly verified by the interviewee. From her experience, she said that, first of all, yoga is a way for exercise which does not damage joints, but makes players strong. Second, stress is relieved. Third, balance, i.e. sharing is encouraged. Her empirical statement was consistent with several studies referred by WHO (2005, p.192) (i.e., Brown et al., 1995; La Forge, 1997; Li, Hong and Chan, 2001) and Chaoul and Cohen (2010, p.144), Douglass (2011, p.84) and Gangadhar and Varambally (2011, p.60) that, to improve one's body and mind condition to be healthy, yoga is a wise physical activity approach to be selected.

Malaria

Having a flu could not indicate that a person has malaria. Otherwise, those presented in the dramas might not suffer from malaria. Additional information was required. There were two reasons the claim was addressed. First, malaria was caused by a mosquito-related infection. Nonetheless, what was communicated in *Roi Maan* was because the character seemingly was in the rain for a long time and felt tired due to being hard-working. In *Sao 5 Táptim Sàyaam*, there could be the feasibility because the whole drama was taken place in a forest, in contrast, no cause was identified. The nurse, furthermore, made clear that the symptoms of malaria are having a fever on time, severe trembling, blurred, and having yellow body resulting from blood cell fragile. These basic facts were confirmed by several academic institutes (e.g., Bureau of Epidemiology, n.d.; Centre of Arts and Information Technology, n.d.; The Hospital for Tropical Diseases, n.d.; WHO, 2011; see more in Akinosoglou & Pasvol, 2011). Several studies from different nations revealed more need of effective communication for raising knowledge on malaria (Hlongwana, Mabaso, Kunene, Govender and Maharaj, 2009; Olayemi, Omalu, Abolarinwa, Mustapha, Ayanwale, Mohammed, Bello and Chukwuemeka, 2012) and, especially understanding

regarding malaria symptoms (Kinung, Mashauri, Mwanga, Nnko, Kaatano, Malima, Kishamawe, Magesa and Mboera, 2010).

Stress-Related Diseases

No matter brain stroke, gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD), and heart disease are all from stress. In *Nai Roi Rák*, it was true, as elucidated step by step by the nurse, that when someone is hit by stress, his artery is oppressed and that lead to ischemic heart disease. For the case of GERD, in *Saam Nùm Néua Tong*, although it is basically originated in tension, it is feasible for the patients to suffer from digestion problem. Otherwise, it is important to differentiate the patients who are suffering from GERD and the ones who have the difficulty in digestion, for instance, patients with having digestion problem and those with having pregnancy. This is because these two types of diseases give the similar symptom, i.e. digestion problem, flatulence, high blood pressure, and insomnia. In *Naangfáa Gàp Maafia*, it could not be strange for having the vital sign of or heart attack or chest pain. As the nurse apparently explained, a patient who is suffering from cardiovascular disease has chest pain and having the difficult to breathe because of ischemic heart disease resulting from blood being clotted.

Cancer

In the different dramas, while one (i.e., *Naangfáa Gàp Maafia*) gave the symptom of brain cancer causing *Prá Áyk* to get a headache, the other one explained the symptoms of the last period of stomach cancer (i.e., *Roi Maan*), i.e. having a pale face, getting a headache, having unconscious, being thin, and being extremely weak. Together with these signs, medicines are to be taken. These two *lakorns* presented the possible fact of patients who were affected by brain cancer and stomach cancer. The nurse said that for those who are suffering from brain cancer have (more extremely) unexpected headache and vomit. Apart from these symptoms, the vital signs of brain cancer are off one's oats, emotional and behavioural changes, cognitive and learning change, and convulsion (Department of Radiation and Cancer, Faculty of Medical Science, Chulalongkorn University, n.d.). It is different from those who are suffering from migraine because although they have a headache, just one side they consciously feel, said the nurse. For stomach cancer, the interviewee described that such symptoms are not the signs for those who are suffering from it in the first period. Instead, it is over the first period. She said that hematemesis and loss of weight are shown.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

This issue was visibly seen in *Gaym Rái Gaym Rák* and *Naangfáa Gàp Maafia*. The first *lakorn* explained the scene that a main character who was a doctor was performing a brain operation. Suddenly, the patient's blood pressure was down and his heart nearly stopped. The doctor immediately made CPR for the patient's re-birth. For the second drama, it was said that 30 times of chest compression were done and were interrupted by two times of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. These were done repeatedly. It was possible for either the former or the latter

cases. Nevertheless, further information was required, especially for the second case. There are many prior stages missing, i.e. calling the patient to check whether he is conscious, calling for a help through a helpline, body arrangement, lifting up his respiratory, and checking whether he is breathing, as agreed by The Heart Association of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of HM the King (n.d.) and the key informant. Likewise, the organisation recommended that 15 times each time and the four times are required for chest compression as well as each time is interfered by two times of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Not only this, but also the rhythm of counting is rather slower as the data provided by the organisation than the one in the drama (see more details on the Heart Association of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of HM the King, n.d.). However, the nurse commented that, although different individuals have different speeds of chest compression, in the medical principle, the heart must be compressed.

Nutrition and diseases

Two points of view relating to nutrition and diseases were presented. On the one hand, eating habit could result in disease infections. On the other hand, disease infections could be reduced by a variety of food and herbs. All the possible, impossible, and needed information were the outcomes. According to the nurse, colitis, given in *Nai Roi Rák* derives from virus and bacteria infections leading to irritation. It was also right that, in the same drama, apart from stress, food, such as tasty and high-fat contained is a related factor causing a problem with artery. This is because eating food or dopamine helps stress reduction.

The relations between Thai herbs and disease prevention were considered. For example, as said in *Sao 5 Táptim Sàyaam* Episode, no one rejected the fact that quinine cures those who are affected by malaria (e.g., the nurse interviewed, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2011; Chomprach and Yonchaitrakul, n.d.; Ministry of Public Health, 2003; Pradines, Pistone, Ezzedine, Briolant, Bertaux, Receveur, Parzy, Millet, Rogier, & Malvy, 2010; WHO, 2010b, p.ix), despite in children (Aguwa, Ukwe and Adibe, 2010; Kyu and Fernández, 2009). However, there are requirements to be considered, i.e. taking not only quinine, but also with other medicines, such as tetracycline or doxycycline or clindamycine, the period of the medicine taking, and frequency of medicine taking (see more in CDC, 2011; Ministry of Public Health, 2003; WHO, 2010b, p.ix; see also Achan, Talisuna, Erhart, Yeka, Tibenderana, Baliraine, Rosenthal and D'Alessandro, 2011).

In *Saam Nùm Néua Tong*, Babblers' bill leaf or Rang Jued herb tea could help alcohol withdrawal. As clarified by the nurse, it is regarded as a cold medicine, which helps flu reduction and sugar cutback. According to the National Committee of Drug System Development (2011, p.53, 54), babblers' bill leaf could be valuable in those claims, i.e. flu and alcohol withdrawal. Even though types of herbs were unidentified in, for example, *Gaym Ráai Gaym Rák* and *Sao 5 Táptim Sàyaam* Episode, a wide range of herbs, such as *houltuynia cordata* thumb, *vap ca*, and the like, suggested by the key informant, could make people healthier. It was also accurate that it is required to drink it every single day. Specifically, in *Naangfáa Gáp Maafía*, it was true in making one healthy by drinking an herbal beverage made from a vine of *Tinospora crispa* (Linn.)

because this part, even being bitter, could reduce heat, cure those who have flu, and encourage food consumption and treat Anorexia Nervosa (Subcharoen and Tangsukruethai, 2001).

It was important to make clear about chicken soup, for the purpose of making patients fresh and recovered. This was because, as provided by the interviewee, it was about Thai belief only since although chicken contains a good source of protein which can provide patients energy, however, it is not a good source of nutrition. It could also be reasoned that hot food fuels metabolism and awakening. It would be better in perceived nutrition if Chinese material medica was added. Together with it, dark meat chicken might possibly be more valuable, as clearly communicated in *Gaym Ráai Gaym Rák*.

7. Discussion

The study could reach what was aimed, i.e. to examine what dimensions of understanding on health and medical angles were addressed and to make a comparison between what was aired on television and what was revealed in academic profession. That is to say, the findings revealed the nine health and medical angles- contraception, memory loss, drug addiction, obesity, malaria, stress-related diseases, cancer, CPR, and nutrition and disease primarily communicated in the Thai television dramas which were systematically selected as the study's case studies. What kinds of health and medical angles communicated in the dramas varied, mainly and presumably following the main plots of them.

The study also disclosed that compared between what was aired and what was disclosed in the academic profession, a more and clearer detail was mostly called for so that comprehensive knowledge and understanding of a health and medical issue is fulfilled. Little was found impossible and possible information was given in a greater extent than the impossible one. Although it could be argued that it is such a common sense in knowing some basic data, some information, especially special requirements have still been unknown. However, both basic and complicated information is beneficial and helpful for people's daily lives.

8. Conclusion

The Thai television dramas should be watched for the purposes of not only entertainment, but also education, health and medical communication, in particular. Despite a much smaller extent than entertainment, like the current study, a wide range of health and medical education was given. What kinds of health and medical knowledge communicated in the *lakorns* studied, included in this study, were mainly comprised of something about the approaches to keep the people away from STIs and, especially women from pregnancy, the inability of remembering past events and surrounding people, the symptoms of those who were addicted to drugs, the disease caused by overweight and eating habit, the mosquito-borne disease, the diseases resulting from tension, the disease coming from cell disorder in brain and stomach, the approach how to survive those who are subconscious, and the benefits of food and herbs in treating patients. The majority of what was aired in the dramas was, likewise,

communicated truly and possibly. However, complete knowledge and understanding of a health and medical angle should be urged. Correct knowledge of these could be cultivated among the audience as long as they are communicated accurately and completely, thus.

9. Limitations

Future study calls for more case studies from other free, non-commercial channels and from other periods of on-air. This is because, in some free television channels, education rather than entertainment is taken into consideration.

10. Recommendations

It is valued that, especially for public relations professionals and health and medical practitioners, the Thai television drama is the means of distributing health and medical information to the audience in order to raise their awareness and promote their behaviour. An effective health and medical communication scheme can later be the expected result. Failure in misunderstanding among the audience could be lessened, furthermore. Therefore, the playwrights should provide additional and clearer information regarding these issues.

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