

Opioids-Getting the Balance Right in Thailand

Supraanee Niruthisard

Chulalongkorn University, King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital, Thailand

It has been known for centuries the remarkable beneficial effects particularly analgesia and the toxic side effects and addictive potential of opioids. Since establishment of Thai Chapter of IASP in 1990, several movement of Thai Chapter has been done to promote pain education, setting different clinical pain guidelines, and improvement of effective and safe pain management including opioid availability and accessibility in the country.

In 1997, the Thai Food and Drugs Administration (Thai FDA), by request of Thai Chapter, increased the opioids quota to be used in the hospitals and relaxed the legitimation of the report on opioid usage resulting in being easier to access medical use of opioids. By the supportive policy of Ministry of Public health, policies implemented by the Thai FDA, the National Health Security Office and the Government Pharmaceutical Organization, the annual Morphine Equivalence consumption in Thailand rose from 3.96 mg per capita in 2010 to 5.85 mg per capita in 2015. However, there was still a long way to go towards equitable level of usage for the whole country and pain remained underassessed and undertreated in the majority of pain patients.

The epidemic of prescription opioid overdose death happened in the United States and some developed countries has called attention to properly use of opioids in different types of pain patients (acute pain and chronic non-cancer pain VS cancer pain and pain in palliative care) according to IASP Opioid Statement. The WHO-2P safety focusing in patient safety with opioid prescription has been implemented in the hospital accreditation program by the Healthcare Accreditation Institute (Public Organization). Continuing education regarding optimized opioid usage and narcotic laws for physicians and related health care personnel, and setting up conferences for policy makers/regulators are needed.