

Title: Addressing maternal and child health mortality MDGs through strengthening the health system: Lessons in capacity building from current collaborative research at the Thai district health service level.

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In Thailand, the health care system has achieved significant progress towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals. In reaching the goals and targets, it has been recognised that value can be added to national initiatives through broader international partnerships. One such partnership is the Thai-Australian Alliance which was formed in 2004. The purpose of this partnership is to focus on capacity building in rural health service management to foster cross-cultural collaboration and knowledge transfer in this field.

This paper will report on a project which attempts to build health management systems research capacity in a group of public health doctoral students and academics. The doctoral studies involved in the project have a specific focus on Maternal and Child Health, two health targets that feature predominantly in the Millennium Development Goals. The pre-planning and implementation stages of the project will be described and it will be shown how a variety of educational interventions to transfer knowledge were used to foster self-reflection, peer discussion and capacity building in five doctoral projects. Finally, it will describe the impact of the cross-cultural exchange in health service management between Thai and Australian health professionals and academics.

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