

Title : Studies on human filariasis in Southern Thailand.

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Objective To find and survey areas in the southern provinces of Thailand in which human filariasis is found. Also to determine the species infecting man and its distribution in the population.

Description Little is known about the extent of human filariasis in Southern Thailand. Perhaps the main reason is that only recently has a good, all-weather road made many of the village accessible. Because this area is so remote even the health centers are few and far between. As a result any one particular village may see the Health Officer for only a few days each year. The provinces of Pattani and Narathiwat were selected for study because of their locality, which is rather remote, and reports that several individuals with elephantiasis had been seen there. In each Province, a reconnaissance was first made to many of the village to locate individuals with elephantiasis. When an area was found in which there were individuals with elephantiasis then a village was selected to be surveyed. Five villages were selected and the area Health Officers contacted. It was necessary to have one of the local health officials accompany us to the villages as many people in this area speak only Malay.

At each village arrangements were made with the Headman to have the people assemble at the school house, as it was usually centrally located, at 2200 hours on a specific day. Because the periodicity of the filarial organism was not known this hour was chosen as representing the best compromise between convenience to the villagers and probable peak microfilaremia. At this time blood smears were taken from everyone and a case history from each individual with elephantiasis. The ages of those examined ranged from 10 to 73 years. The blood smears were then returned to the laboratory in Bangkok for staining and screening for parasites.

All five of the villages were located within ten kilometers of the Gulf of Siam. The economy of the area centres around the three major activities: growing rubber trees, rice, and fishing. The climate is tropical and humid with slight range in extremes.

Progress Ten males and ten females were found with elephantiasis. There seemed to be no significant differences in the severity of the disease between males and females. In all cases observed involvement was limited to the feet and lower portions of the legs. The range in ages of those found infected was from 27 to 73 years with a mean age of 53. From the case histories it was found that on the average the disease first became noticeable at about 35 years of age (range 19—58). The ages of those positive for microfilariae were 14, 16 and 51 years. The data are summarized in Figure no. 1. In no case was an individual with elephantiasis positive for microfilariae. In interviewing those with elephantiasis it was found that none had lived in areas outside of the village in which they then resided.

From examination of the microfilariae it was found to be Brugia malayi. No periodicity studies have been made as yet from this area.

Summary: From a survey of five selected villages in Pattani and Narathiwat Provinces 7% of the population was found to have elephantiasis (Brugia malayi) and approximately 2% with microfilaremia. Involvement, as in other areas where Brugia malayi is found, is limited to the feet and lower portions of the legs

Table I. Incidence of elephantiasis and filariasis in five villages in southern Thailand.

Village	Provinces	Number People Examined	Number with Elephantiasi	Number with Microfilariae
Ban Huaklong	Pattani	27	4	1
Ban Dorn	Pattani	44	4	0
Ban Khekkilek	Narathiwat	48	1	1
Ban Khekkiam	Narathiwat	16	1	0
Ban Galiver the South	Narathiwat	30	1	1
	Total	165	11	3