

Pain Related Articles Published in Thailand in the Last 20 Years

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Background: The Thai Association for the Study of Pain was established 20 years ago with the aim of educating the members and health care providers for pain management and pain research.

Objective: Evaluate the progression of pain research by literature survey on Thai journals, since the beginning of TASP.

Material and Method: Pain related original articles, except for the abstracts, proceedings, case reports, and review articles, published in eight Thai journals between 1990 and 2009 were searched.

Results: The number of pain related articles was 233. The number of articles slowly but gradually increased during 1990 to 2002, drastically increased during 2004 and 2005, and then slightly decreased until 2009. About 75% of the papers were published in Thai language except for those published in one journal that has been published in English. The most common content of articles was related to the acute pain (75%) contributed by anesthesiologists.

Conclusion: Pain research has been significantly increasing since the TASP was founded, especially in the last 10 years. The most common area of research is in the field of acute pain. The majority of the articles were published in Thai language.

Keywords: Pain, Publications, Thai journals

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In 1973 about 350 scientists and clinicians from 13 countries assembled to found a multidisciplinary professional organization dedicated to pain research and management, The International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) is the leading forum for science, practice, and education in the field of pain. IASP brings together scientists, clinicians, health care providers, and policy makers to stimulate and support the study of pain and to translate pain knowledge to improve pain relief worldwide. Today, it has more than 7,500 members from 129 countries, 85 national chapters, and 17 special interest groups⁽¹⁾.

The Thai Association for the Study of Pain (TASP) was established in 1990⁽²⁾. It is a chapter of IASP. It is a local association that share IASP's vision of working together for pain relief throughout the world. TASP has more than 1,900 members in the year 2010. They are from every specialty related to pain

relief including pharmacists, dentists, and nurses. Only few TASP's members, mainly TASP's committees, are members of IASP. For almost 20 years, TASP studied and provided education about pain management. Pain and pain management is now widely recognized by clinicians and policy makers in Thailand. In the past, pain clinics were only found in university hospitals in Thailand. However, recently, almost every leading hospital in Thailand has, or policy to set up, a pain clinic in their hospitals. Besides supporting the knowledge of pain relief, TASP also promotes the members to work for pain research. The objective of the present study is to evaluate the progress of pain research that published in Thai journals since the beginning of TASP until the recent year to keep the results as the TASP database.

Material and Method

The authors manually searched the pain related articles published in the last 20 years (1990-2009) in six main medical university journals and two major local medical journals in Thailand including, Chiang Mai Med J, Chulalongkorn Med J, Ramathibodi

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Med J, Siriraj Hosp Gaz (Siriraj Med J), Srinagarind Med J, Songkla Med J, Thai J Anesthesiol, and J Med Assoc Thai. Only the Srinagarind Med J is freely accessible through a website for all the contents of last 20 years. The other journals were searched both in hard copies and in website. The inclusion criteria were all pain related original research articles published in selected journals. Excluded were the abstracts, proceedings, case reports, and review articles.

Results

Two hundred thirty three pain related original articles were found in eight selected Thai local journals. The number of articles slowly but gradually increased between 1990 and 2002, drastically increased between 2004 and 2005, and slightly decrease in the recent four years (Table 1, Fig. 1).

The major journals that published pain-related papers were Thai J Anesthesiol (38.2%) and J Med Assoc Thai (26.2%). Other six local medical university journals had a similar small numbers of publications

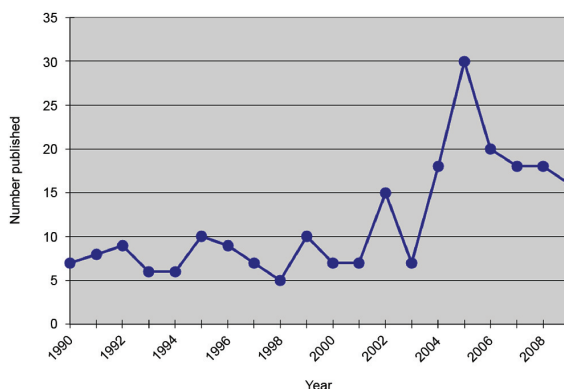


Fig. 1 Total number of articles published in each year (total number = 233 articles).

every year. The articles published in the J Med Assoc Thai were in English whereas those appeared in other journals were in Thai language with English abstract. The number of articles appeared in the each selected journal and the areas of pain research were summarized

Table 1. Total number of articles published by selected journals in each year

	Chiang Mai Med J	Chulalongkorn Med J	Ramathibodi Med J	Siriraj Hosp Gaz	Srinagarind Med J	Songkla Med J	Thai J Anesthesiol	J Med Assoc Thai	Total
1990		0	2	1	0	0	4	0	7
1991		0	2	0	0	1	5	0	8
1992		0	4	0	1	0	3	1	9
1993		0	1	0	0	0	4	1	6
1994	1	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	6
1995		0	1	0	1	0	6	2	10
1996		1	0	0	0	0	6	2	9
1997		0	0	2	1	1	2	1	7
1998		0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
1999		1	0	2	0	0	6	1	10
2000		0	0	0	0	0	5	2	7
2001		0	0	0	2	0	4	1	7
2002		0	0	1	2	1	2	9	15
2003		1	0	1	1	2	1	1	7
2004		3	0	1	1	3	5	5	18
2005	1	5	0	0	2	3	10	9	30
2006		0	0	3	5	0	7	5	20
2007		3	0	0	3	0	5	7	18
2008		2	1	0	2	1	5	7	18
2009	1	1	0	2	2	1	2	7	16
Total	3	18	11	15	23	13	89	61	233

Table 2. Number of articles published in each journal and type of pain

Journals	Type of pain					Total (%)
	Basic science	Acute	Cancer	Chronic non cancer	Mixed	
Chiang Mai Med J	3	0	0	0	0	3 (1.3)
Chulalongkorn Med J	0	12	0	6	0	18 (7.7)
Ramathibodi Med J	0	9	1	1	0	11 (4.7)
Siriraj Hosp Gaz	0	11	0	3	1	15 (6.4)
Srinagarind Med J	0	18	0	5	0	23 (9.9)
Songkla Med J	0	7	4	2	0	13 (5.6)
Thai J Anesthesiology	0	76	8	5	0	89 (38.2)
J Med Assoc Thai	0	43	7	10	1	61 (26.2)
Total: number (%)	3 (1.3)	176 (75.5)	20 (8.6)	32 (13.7)	2 (0.9)	233 (100)

in Table 2. The article related in acute pain research is most popular (75.5%) followed by chronic non-cancer pain (13.7%). Only three articles from Chiang Mai Med J dealt with basic research on pain.

Discussion

Because of the limitation that we could not search for all pain-related articles in every journal that printed in Thai language, the results did not cover all pain related papers that published in Thailand. Nevertheless, we believe that the number of published papers included in this study was enough to evaluate the trend of pain-related research during the past 20 years of the TASP activities, because we have surveyed eight major Thai local journals related to pain research. In fact, an overall increase in pain research reflects the activities of TASP.

Although the numbers of papers annually published have been increasing, the total number per year remains small, about 10 papers per year, suggesting that the leading physicians in the pain-related research with creativity is limited. The TASP mission should reconsider again about the strategies for the research capability strengthening. Whatever, when compared with the past, papers published in English language in J Med Assoc Thai and other international journals in the PubMed search, are increasing. This means the quality of pain research has been gradually improved and might be an explanation for the slight decrease in number of articles published in the last four years in Thai journals.

The majority of the articles found by this survey were related to acute pain or postoperative pain. The research related to other types of pain was limited. This is because most of the authors were

anesthesiologists that take major responsibility in postoperative pain treatment. In addition, the study designs for acute postoperative pain are not as complicated as in the chronic pain, which is also a time consuming job. Research on cancer-associated pain and others type of pain is still lacking of interest and needs to improve both knowledge and practices.

Accessibility to the selected journals in the present study is another issue of concern. Although all the journals included in the present study have their own website, the authors found that there was only one journal that can be easily accessed. This implies that the dissemination and utilization of pain knowledge in Thailand is also limited.

Conclusion

Pain related research has gradually increased during the past 20 years since the TASP was founded. Most contributed is in the field of acute pain by anesthesiologists but their work is only partially accessed by web search.

Acknowledgement

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Potential conflicts of interest

None.

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การศึกษาถึงจำนวนของบทความเกี่ยวกับการระงับปวดที่ได้รับการตีพิมพ์ในวารสารการแพทย์ไทยในระยะเวลาสี่สิบปีที่ผ่านมา

สหทยา ไพบูลย์วรชาติ, สมบูรณ์ เทียนทอง, สติกานต์ นิมมานรัชต์, สุปราณี นิรุตติศาสน์, วิชัย อธิรัชชัยกุลกุล, ธิรดา พลอยเพชร

วัตถุประสงค์: สมาคมการศึกษาเรื่องความปวดแห่งประเทศไทยได้ก่อตั้งมาเป็นเวลา 20 ปี โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อให้ความรู้แก่สมาชิกและบุคลากรทางการแพทย์ ดังนั้นวัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษานี้ก็เพื่อประเมินว่าการตีพิมพ์ผลการศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการระงับปวดในประเทศไทยมากขึ้นเพียงใดนับตั้งแต่มีการจัดตั้งสมาคมจนถึงปัจจุบัน

วัสดุและวิธีการ: ทำการค้นข้อมูลจากวารสารที่มีชื่อเสียงทั้งหมด 8 วารสาร ระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2533 ถึง พ.ศ. 2552 โดยนับเฉพาะผลการศึกษาที่เป็นนิพนธ์ต้นฉบับ ไม่รวมรายงานผู้ป่วยหรือการทบทวนบทความทางวิชาการ

ผลการศึกษา: มีผลการศึกษาที่ตีพิมพ์ทั้งหมด 233 เรื่อง โดยการตีพิมพ์ค่อยๆ เพิ่มขึ้นและสูงสุดในปี พ.ศ. 2548 และลดลงเล็กน้อยในช่วงปี พ.ศ. 2552 ผลการศึกษาประมาณร้อยละ 75 ตีพิมพ์เป็นภาษาไทย โดยมีวารสารฉบับเดียวที่ตีพิมพ์เป็นภาษาอังกฤษและการศึกษาส่วนใหญ่ (ร้อยละ 75) เป็นเรื่องการระงับปวดเฉียบพลัน โดยเฉพาะการระงับปวดหลังผ่าตัดซึ่งเป็นผลงานของวิสัญญีแพทย์เป็นหลัก

สรุป: การตีพิมพ์ผลการศึกษาเกี่ยวกับความปวดมีจำนวนมากขึ้นโดยเฉพาะสิบปีหลังของการก่อตั้งสมาคมฯ ผลงานตีพิมพ์ส่วนใหญ่เป็นเรื่องการระงับปวดหลังผ่าตัดและตีพิมพ์เป็นภาษาไทย
