

**OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY-BASED METHADONE THERAPY  
WITH INTEGRATED HARM REDUCTION USING A CLIENT-  
CENTERED APPROACH IN SONGKHLA PROVINCE, THAILAND**



**Introduction:** Care Team Songkhla works with people who inject drugs (PWID) to reduce drug-related harm in Songkhla Province under the Stop Tuberculosis and AIDS through RRTTPR project (STAR 2024-26), funded by the Global Fund.



**Purpose:** Chana District in Songkhla has a significant PWID population. In 2021, 156 PWIDs were identified, but only 96 accessed methadone treatment at Chana Hospital. Barriers to access included distance from the hospital, mismatched service hours, travel costs, lack of transport, and fear of legal issues due to numerous police checkpoints.

**Methodology:** In response, Care Team Songkhla collaborated with Chana Hospital to discuss setting up a methadone clinic in the community. In 2022, a survey was conducted to gauge interest from heroin users. Community members and families were engaged in discussions about the need for methadone services. A partner network helped establish regulations and agreements. A committee was also set up to ensure the quality standards of methadone services in the community. The community's multipurpose pavilion was selected as the clinic's site, and the "Happy mind Center" was established as a safe and accessible facility.



**Results:** The clinic opened in June 2022 with 20 clients, growing to 40. Community members supported its establishment. Among the 15 clients receiving methadone regularly, at least 80% adhered to their required treatments, demonstrating behavioral improvements, including a 60% decrease in heroin use, with 13.3% stopping heroin entirely and 33.4% reducing their injection frequency. In terms of quality of life, 73.3% reported increased income, 60% improved physical health, and 86.7% better mental health. Additionally, 33.3% experienced greater acceptance from others, and 46.7% reported improved family relationships.



**Conclusion:** The community-based methadone clinic, driven by the intent to address the needs of service recipients in collaboration with all stakeholders, contribute to positive behavioral changes and improvements in the quality of life for clients.