

Prevalence, Preparedness, and Factors associated with Injuries among Thai Trekkers in a Thai National Park

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Introduction

Trekking has become one of the most popular recreational activities among Thais. Injury susceptibility varied according to location, season, and environment. Injury may have been prevented with proper planning and preparation.

Objective

The objective of this study was to determine the prevalence, preparation, and factors associated with trekking injuries in Thailand's national parks.

Method

This was a cross-sectional study conducted in Thailand in October 2022. An online survey (REDCap) was distributed through online social media platforms. Adult (≥ 18 years old) Thai trekkers who visited Thailand's national parks were invited to participate. Porters, park rangers, tour guides, and locals were excluded.

Result

A total of 179 subjects were available for analysis. The mean age was 40 years old. 19.5% were first-time trekkers. The median (IQR) preparation time was 2 (1-7) days. The prevalence of injuries was 35.8%, with 50.3% occurring on the trunk. Scratching (41.9%), bruising or contusion (23.5%), and sprain (7.8%) were the most common injuries. There were no reported fractures. Ticks/fleas (27.4%), black flies (19.6%), and slugs (16.8%) assaulted the majority of trekkers. Thai trekkers obtained travel health information via the internet (77.7%) and from friends (41.3%). 54.2% had a first-aid kit with antipyretic (45%), muscle relaxant (45%), and antihistamine (43.6%) medications.

Playing in the water during a trekking trip was associated with moderate to severe injuries (aOR 28.2, 95% CI 1.46-543.13, p-value 0.027) and mild injury (aOR 4.8, 95% CI 1.63-13.86, p-value 0.004). When adequate risk awareness was a protective factor for moderate to severe injuries while trekking (aOR 0.25, 95% CI 0.06-0.99, p-value 0.048).

Conclusion

A third of Thai trekkers suffered minor injuries while trekking. Travel medicine practitioners should inform trekkers about the risks of injury and provide adequate health preparation to reduce injuries.

Keywords:

Injury, Trekker, Thailand, Traveler, Health problem