

# Health policies and practices among secondary schools in Taiwan and Thailand

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## Abstract

**Background:** This study helps public health professionals to measure and assess school health policies and practices, and allow international agencies to make comparisons across countries. The purpose of the study is to provide accurate data on school health policies/practices and risky/protective factors in schools, evaluate associations between school health programs, students' academic performance and health problems, in secondary schools in Taiwan and Thailand.

**Methods:** Secondary school principals were interviewed on school health policies and practices. Data from 22 Taiwanese and 17 Thai schools were analyzed. Analysis of variance was conducted to identify significant differences between Thai and Taiwanese schools. Multiple regressions were conducted to examine associations between school health profiles, students' academic performance and health problems.

**Results:** In Taiwan and Thailand, both health education and physical education are required in all secondary schools; and all schools provide health examinations and physical activity tests. Student tardiness, poverty, and lack of academic challenge were self-reported as top problems in Taiwan; student tardiness, poverty, and vandalism of school property as self-reported as top problems in Thailand. The evaluation of school policies and practices indicated that to become healthier schools: schools in Taiwan can improve school/community health projects, and counseling and social support; and schools in Thailand can improve family involvement, and healthy and safe school environment.

**Conclusions:** Secondary schools in Taiwan and Thailand have addressed most of the components of school health. Addressing weakness in school health components can further improve students' health status and prevent risky behaviors.