

# COMPETENCY IN DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF DENGUE INFECTION AMONG GRADUATING MEDICAL STUDENTS IN THAILAND

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**Abstract.** Dengue infection is a major problem in Thailand. Physicians are required to manage patients with dengue infection effectively. We aimed to determine the ability of medical students in Thailand to manage these patients in order to inform their training programs. We used a modified essay questionnaire (MEQ) to assess the knowledge of graduating medical students about the recognition and management of the various stages of dengue infection. The MEQ consisted of a hypothetical case of a patient with dengue infection that developed dengue shock syndrome. Scores from the examination of 259 graduating medical students from 4 different medical schools were collected in this study. We calculated the percentage of students who correctly managed the case scenario and then compared the correct responses by medical school and student performance group. Eighty-two percent of participants correctly recognized dengue infection and 87% correctly recognized dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF). Of these, 30% correctly chose intravenous fluid resuscitation. Forty-three percent correctly recognized impending shock and 17% gave appropriate resuscitation. About 50% of participants recognized the bleeding and the convalescent stages. Forty-five percent of participants chose appropriate management of the convalescent stage. The correct response rates did not differ significantly by medical school. Above-average students performed better than average and below-average students in nearly all the scenarios. Most study participants correctly diagnosed dengue infection. However, the percentages of participants who recognized the different stages of dengue infection and who correctly managed the intravenous fluid treatment of the dengue patient were inadequate. Greater emphasis needs to be placed in the curriculum of these students on those aspects in their respective training programs.

**Keywords:** MEQ, dengue infection teaching

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