

[Glob Public Health](#). 2014;9(4):426-35. doi: 10.1080/17441692.2014.894549. Epub 2014 Apr 1.

Religious affiliation and disparities in risk of non-communicable diseases and health behaviours: findings from the fourth Thai National Health Examination Survey.

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Abstract

This study aims to compare the health-related behaviours and risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) between Muslims and non-Muslims in Thailand, a predominantly Buddhist country in which Muslims are the second largest religious group. Data from the fourth Thai National Health Examination Survey (NHES IV) conducted in 2009 were used to run multivariate survey logistic regression models with adjustment for age, gender and socio-economic status indicators. Data from 20,450 respondents, of whom 807 (3.9%) were Muslims, were included in the study. Muslims were significantly more likely to have daily consumption of deep-fried food (adjusted odds ratio [OR]=1.35; 95% confidence interval [CI]=1.15-1.58) and packaged snacks (adjusted OR=1.55; 95% CI=1.30-1.86), and have inadequate control of hypercholesterolemia (adjusted OR=2.95; 95% CI=1.30-6.68). In conclusion, we found disparity in the majority of risk factors for NCDs between Muslim and non-Muslim Thais.

KEYWORDS:

Thailand; global health; health disparities; non-communicable diseases; population health