

# Survey on knowledge and attitudes regarding the impact of climate change on mental health in Thailand

Aunchittha Sareesanitwong

Mukdahan School

Mukdahan, Thailand

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**Abstract:** Currently, the world is facing increasingly frequent changes in climate, which not only involve rising temperatures but also extreme weather events, population shifts in ecosystems and migration, rising sea levels, and other environmental impacts. These changes in climate also affect the human nervous system and brain, leading to a higher incidence of “mental health problems.” However, this issue is often overlooked and not extensively addressed by researchers. The objective of this survey-based research is to study the knowledge and attitudes regarding climate change’s impact on mental health in Thailand. The sample group consists of 60 participants, and data is collected using questionnaires about their knowledge and attitudes regarding how climate change affects mental health in Thailand. The research findings indicate that knowledge and attitudes regarding climate change’s impact on mental health are generally consistent. This could be due to the high percentage (91.7%) of information received through the internet/social media. However, there are still some respondents who selected “disagree” or “unsure.” These findings highlight the necessity of continuously promoting knowledge about climate change’s impact on mental health to enhance prevention and intervention strategies for mental health issues among Thai people.

**Keywords:** Climate, impacts, mental health, knowledge, attitude.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the world is facing ongoing climate change, with temperatures increasing in all regions from the northern to the southern hemispheres. Climate change not only involves temperature rise but also leads to extreme weather events, changes in ecosystems and migration patterns, sea level rise, and other impacts resulting from greenhouse gas emissions, trapping heat in the atmosphere and causing surface warming (NGThai, 2024).

Besides its natural and environmental impacts, climate change also affects the human nervous system and brain, including memory, identity formation, and brain structure, contributing to an increase in mental health issues, particularly anxiety and depression, which are often overlooked and not addressed. Concerns and sadness are the most common mental health issues arising from climate change. In the future, if environmental conditions continue to deteriorate, it would not be surprising if people lose hope and are unable to cope with their surroundings. The impact of climate change on mental health is an undeniable issue (Electronic Transaction Development Agency, 2023).

The study referenced aims to analyze the level of awareness, attitudes, and importance of climate change among Thai people by surveying the opinions of a sample group of 60 individuals.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The educational format is cross-sectional study. The population and sample group for this study are individuals who reside and are native to Thailand. The selection criteria for the sample group include individuals aged 6 to over 60 years old who are willing to participate in the research. The sample group for this study consists of 60 individuals. Data collection was conducted from February to May 2024.

The survey tool consists of 3 parts:

**Section 1:** General Information Data Sheet

**Section 2:** Questionnaire on Knowledge about the Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health in Thailand, consisting of 5 questions with 3 multiple-choice options: Agree, Disagree, and Not Sure.

**Section 3:** Questionnaire on Attitudes toward the Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health in Thailand, consisting of 2 questions with 3 multiple-choice options: Agree, Disagree, and Not Sure.

### 3. RESULTS

**Table 1: Number and percentage of general characteristics of the population living and domiciled in Thailand.**

Attribute	Quantity (percent)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	23 (38.3)
Female	35 (58.3)
LGBTQ+	2 (2.3)
<b>Age</b>	
6-12	8 (13.3)
13-20	31 (51.7)
21-60	15 (25)
60+	6 (10)
<b>Channels for receiving information on weather changes</b>	
Internet/Social media	55 (91.7)
Television	5 (8.3)
Volunteers/medical personnel	-
Radio	-
Newspaper/print media	-

**Table 2: Amount and percentage of knowledge and attitudes about climate change affecting mental health in Thailand**

Choice	Quantity (percent)		
	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
<b>Knowledge about climate change affecting mental health in Thailand</b>			
1.Do you think the weather affects mental health?	56(93.3)	-	4(6.7)
2.Do you believe rapidly changing weather can affect mental health?	55(91.7)	1(1.7)	4(6.7)
3.Anxiety and depression are among the most common mental health issues associated with changes in weather conditions?	33(55)	12(20)	15(25)
4.Increasing temperatures are correlated with mental health issues such as fatigue, irritability, and higher rates of suicide?	51(85)	-	9(15)
5.Do you feel anxious or stressed when there's a change in weather conditions?	34(56.7)	7(11.7)	19(31.7)

<b>Attitudes regarding climate change affecting mental health in Thailand</b>			
6.The negative impact of weather changes on mental health is no difference from its effect on physical health?	58(96.7)	-	2(3.3)
7.Providing knowledge about the impact of heat on mental health can help people understand the importance of taking action to address the issue more effectively?	52(86.7)	-	8(13.3)

**Research results**

1.General information of the sample group The results of the study found that The sample group consisted of 60 people, 35 of whom were mostly female. 58.3% were in the age range of 13-20 years. 51.7% had channels to receive information on climate change. Via the internet/social media: 55 people, 91.7% (as shown in Table 1)

2. The level of knowledge and attitude about climate change affecting mental health in Thailand was found...

**Table 1. Do you think the weather affects mental health?**

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
56	-	4
93.3%	-	6.7%

From a survey of 60 respondents, it was found that 56 respondents chose “Agree,” accounting for 93.3%, and 4 respondents chose “Disagree,” accounting for 6.7%. From the question asking whether weather conditions affect mental health, it can be concluded that the majority agree that weather conditions indeed affect mental health.

**Table 2. Do you believe rapidly changing weather can affect mental health?**

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
55	1	4
91.7%	1.7%	6.7%

From a survey of 60 respondents, it was found that 55 respondents chose “Agree,” accounting for 91.7%. One respondent chose “Disagree,” accounting for 1.7%, and 4 respondents chose “Not sure,” accounting for 6.7%. From the question asking whether rapid changes in weather can affect mental health, it can be concluded that the majority agree that rapid changes in weather can indeed affect mental health.

**Table 3. Anxiety and depression are among the most common mental health issues associated with changes in weather conditions?**

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
33	12	15
55%	20%	25%

From a survey of 60 respondents, it was found that 33 respondents (55%) chose “agree,” 12 respondents (20%) chose “disagree,” and 15 respondents (25%) chose “not sure” in response to the question of whether anxiety and depression are among the most common mental health problems resulting from climate change, it can be conclusion that the majority of people acknowledge that anxiety and depression are among the most common mental health problems caused by climate change.

**Table 4. Increasing temperatures are correlated with mental health issues such as fatigue, irritability, and higher rates of suicide?**

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
51	-	9
85%	-	15%

From a survey of 60 participants, it was found that 51 respondents, or 85%, agreed with the statement, and 9 respondents, or 15%, were unsure regarding the question that higher temperatures are associated with mental health issues such as mental fatigue, aggression, and increased suicide rates. It can be conclusion that the majority of people acknowledge that higher temperatures are associated with mental health issues such as mental fatigue, aggression, and increased suicide rates.

**Table 5. Do you feel anxious or stressed when there's a change in weather conditions?**

Agree	Disagree	Not sure
34	7	19
56.7%	11.7%	31.7%

From a survey of 60 participants, it was found that 34 respondents, or 56.7%, agreed with the statement, 7 respondents, or 11.7%, disagreed, and 19 respondents, or 31.7%, were unsure regarding the question of whether they feel worried or stressed when there is climate change. It can be conclusion that the majority of people acknowledge that they feel worried or stressed when there is climate change.

**Table 6. The negative impact of weather changes on mental health is no difference from its effect on physical health?**

Agree	Disagree	Not sure
58	-	2
96.7%	-	3.3%

From a survey of 60 participants, it was found that 58 respondents, or 96.7%, agreed with the statement, and 2 respondents, or 3.3%, were unsure regarding the question that the negative impact of weather changes on mental health is no different from its effect on physical health. It can be conclusion that the majority of people acknowledge that the negative impact of weather changes on mental health is no different from its effect on physical health.

**Table 7. Providing knowledge about the impact of heat on mental health can help people understand the importance of taking action to address the issue more effectively?**

Agree	Disagree	Not sure
52	-	8
86.7%	-	13.3%

From a survey of 60 participants, it was found that 52 respondents, or 86.7%, agreed with the statement, and 8 respondents, or 13.3%, were unsure regarding the question that providing knowledge about the impact of heat on mental health can help people understand the importance of taking action to address the issue more effectively. It can be conclusion that the majority of people acknowledge that providing knowledge about the impact of heat on mental health can help people understand the importance of taking action to address the issue more effectively.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The analysis results regarding knowledge and attitudes towards the impact of climate change on mental health, which share a similar perspective, may stem from the fact that up to 91.7% of information is received through the internet/social media. However, there are still some respondents who selected "Disagree and Not sure" regarding the aforementioned questions:

1. The climate affects mental health.
2. Rapidly changing weather can affect mental health.
3. Anxiety and depression are among the most common mental health problems resulting from climate change.
4. Rising temperatures are related to mental health issues such as fatigue, irritability, and increased suicide rates.
5. There is anxiety or stress when there are changes in weather conditions.
6. Changes in weather negatively impact mental health, similar to physical health.
7. Providing information about the impact of heat on mental health and severity can help people understand the importance of taking action to address these issues.

These points underscore the importance of promoting continuous knowledge about climate change's effects on mental health. This study also found a correlation between knowledge levels and personal factors such as age and information channels. The majority of respondents received information about climate change's effects on mental health through the internet/social media, with television being the next most common source. This highlights the significance of using the internet/social media as a channel to promote knowledge in today's society, where technology is increasingly used for communication. However, addressing fake news and inaccurate online information is crucial as they can lead to misunderstandings, stress, and anxiety.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

From the survey on knowledge and attitudes towards climate change affecting mental health in Thailand, factors related to the level of knowledge and attitudes include age and the channels through which information about climate change affecting mental health is received. This information can be used as a guideline to promote and protect the mental health of Thai people more effectively. The findings emphasize the importance of providing accurate and trustworthy information through the internet and online social media channels. Facing uncertain or fake news online can lead to misunderstandings and stress, which may hinder effective mental health promotion and protection efforts for Thai people.

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