

**Exploring the Socio-Economic Impacts of HIV/AIDS:
Evidence from Northeast Thailand**

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Abstract

There have been several attempts to estimate the socio-economic impacts of the epidemic in Thailand (e.g. see Pitayanon *et al* 1997). However, these estimates often fail to take into account broader impacts on society, including impacts on households that do not directly care for HIV-infected individuals.

We collected data from 71 randomly selected households of PLWHA and 660 representative households in Khon Kaen Province in 2003. Socio-economic impacts were assessed by comparing the current household of the PLWHA with their household at 'impact time' and with households from the representative sample.

Our statistical analysis reveals that impacts differ by mobility of the PLWHA. 'Movers' now belonged to a larger household, were more likely to engage in agriculture, and were more likely to be in poverty. 'Non-movers' had insignificant impacts on wealth, decreases in poverty, and their household size had decreased. Most impacts increased with the elapsed time since 'impact time'. Both directly- and indirectly-affected households employed a wide range of coping strategies to mitigate the adverse impacts of HIV/AIDS.

Previous estimates probably underestimate the total welfare impacts of the epidemic. The benefits of policies or programs that reduce HIV/AIDS may have substantially greater benefits than previously thought.