

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION OF STUDY 1

1. Background and rationale of study 1

Respiratory tract infections are among the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in childhood (Fleming, et al., 2005). URI are the most common infections in human, regardless of age and gender (Heikkinen and Jarvinen, 2003). Drugstores in developing countries are increasingly becoming an important source of health service because of ease of access, availability of medicines, rather high quality of service (no waiting and convenient hours of operation), cheaper products and the option to buy small amounts of drugs (Goel, et al., 1996). However, drugstores often inappropriately dispense antibiotics (Kunin, 1995). Not only are antibiotics useless in this case (Arroll, 2005b), but also drug reactions (Dancer, 2004) and development of drug-resistant pathogens are not uncommon (Larrabee, 2002).

In Thailand, drugstores are staffed with either part-time or full-time pharmacists. They have the opportunity to directly influence the health of patients through diagnosis, drug dispensing and advising. A practising pharmacist can legally dispense antibiotics without prescription. A number of previous studies have demonstrated the overuse and misuse of antibiotics for URI in drugstores (Chuc, et al., 2001; Thamlikitkul, 1988). Plianbangchang (1999) showed that community pharmacists believed antibiotics would be effective in preventing possible infections and reduce the course of disease. Faulty beliefs can be an important factor influencing inappropriate antibiotic dispensing. Earlier training courses attempting to improve quality of care provided knowledge to drugstore personnel. The programs failed to change their practice (Rattanawijitrasin, et al., 2002). A better understanding of factors affecting dispensing behaviors is needed.

In this study, the theory of planned behavior is utilized to explain the pharmacists' intention to dispense antibiotics. Due to the theory, the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior is, the greater the possibility of its performance is (Ajzen, 1991).

2. Objectives of study 1

- 1) To evaluate the degree of intention for antibiotic dispensing to manage URI among the pharmacists
- 2) To determine the predictors of intention to dispense antibiotics