

PH 012291 : HEALTH SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

KEY WORD : DISABILITY/THE ELDERLY

CHULARAT BOONYAKAWEE : THE FUNCTIONAL DISABILITY OF  
THE ELDERLY IN TAMBON KRABINOI MOUNG DISTRICT KRABI  
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This research investigates the functional disability of the elderly residents of Tambon Krabi-noi, Muang district, Krabi province in 2005 and aims to explore (1) the prevalence of the disability and dependency level and (2) the correlation between the disability and their socio-economic factors. Barthel ADL index and Chula ADL index were utilized as the research tools to assess the disability. Data had been collected among 290 sample cases from January-March 2005.

Results indicate that the majority of the sample cases shared some common characteristics as follows; female, aged 60-69 years, Buddhist, married, graduated from the primary school, and being able to read and write fluently. Almost half of them earned sufficient incomes but did not have left for saving. Most of the elderly resided with their spouse, child and grandchild and lived in their own house. Although their child and grandchild took responsibility in providing care and support, most of the caregiver were still working outside the house. Four fifths of the elderly had health problems and arthritis and eyesight were the most common problems among the elderly.

Regarding their performance in 10 basic daily activities, results show that 9 out of 10 older people could take a very good care of themselves while for extended daily activities, assistance in traveling in a vehicle was still needed the most. Comparisons between their performance of basic and extended daily activities reveal that the elderly experienced more difficulties in performing the extended activities than the basic ones by 19%.

Additionally, 64.8% of the elderly suffered from long-term disability and 87 % of the long-term disability originated from illnesses. Arthritis and soreness at knee joints were the most common among the elderly. Concerning the elderly opinion towards the disability, 70.7% responded that illnesses, health problems or impairments were the cause or result of the disability and arthritis or pains/aches in other parts of the body was found the highest (40.8%).

Results on new health problems occurring within the past month show that 29.7% of the elderly experienced some new health problems caused by illnesses, accidents or injuries and flu and sore throat were the most common (17.2%). Overall, 64.8% of the elderly suffered from disability. The elderly with short-term disability were account for 7.2% while the number of those with long-term disability was as high as 63.4%.

Concerning the dependency level of the elderly with disability, 61.4% were at very low initial level which means they were still able to move outside their house. Factors which were related to disability in performing basic daily activities were age, writing ability, types of family and health problems. Also, age, religion, marital status, reading and writing ability, living conditions, income sufficiency, care and support and health problems were significantly related to disability in performing extended daily activities. In addition, sex, education, reading and writing ability, religion, income sufficiency and health problems were significantly related to long-term disability. Overall, education, reading and writing ability, religion, income sufficiency and health problems were significantly related to disability.

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