

**UTILIZATION OF HEALTH CENTER SERVICE
AMONG THE VILLAGERS IN RURAL AREAS OF
KHONKAEN PROVINCE, THAILAND**

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ABSTRACT

The cross-sectional study was conducted to investigate the utilization of health center services and related factors among the villagers in rural areas of Khonkaen Province, Thailand. The factors were socio-demographic characteristics, attitude toward health center, accessibility of health center, satisfaction with health center and utilization of health center service.

A quantitative approach using structured questionnaire was undertaken among the 254 villages (86 males, 168 females) aged from 20 to 65 years old, who use or don't use the health center service and had illness in the past 6 months recall period. For data analysis, descriptive statistical analysis techniques were used to describe the frequencies and percentages of variables. The Chi-square test was used for relationship, with the significance level set at 0.05.

The result revealed that 56.7percent were between 40-59 years of age average family size was 4.6 percent. The majority of respondents were female (66.1%) and many were married (84.9%). Education level of respondents was primary school level (89.7%). The main occupation (90.2%) was agriculture. Income was sufficient and no savings for family expenses (55.5%). For attitudes towards the health center, respondents were at (53.9%) low attitude, 87.8 percent went to health center by using own transport vehicle, traveling time of respondents was 6-15 minutes (44.5 percent). 83.1percent felt that it was convenient to reach the health center. 53.8 percent had to pay 21-50 baht for each visit. 67.7 percent felt that the cost of service in health center was not expensive. And low satisfaction or dissatisfied with health center was 58.7 and 41.3 percent respectively. In the past 6 months, 67.7 percent who lived near the health center had used this kind of service. For reason not used, 30.9 percent stated that it was inconvenient to go to the health center, did not trust treatment from health personnel (18.5%) at their health center service.

Regarding the relationship between utilization and the related factors, it was found that there were significant relationships between attitude toward health center and utilization of health center service (p-value=0.000), distance (p-value=0.001), and satisfaction (p-value=0.000). However, the study did not find the any significance between socio-demographics, accessibility and utilization of health center service.

The recommendation from this study is that health personnel should have willingness and good manners to serve the patient, the quality of medicine and equipment should be improved, waiting time in the registration room be decreased by increasing staff during rush hours and the number of chairs in the waiting room should be increased.

KEY WORDS: UTILIZATION OF HEALTH CENTER SERVICE

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