

**DIFFERENTIAL UTILIZATION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES
AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS
ON THE THAILAND-MYANMAR BORDER:
A CASE STUDY OF KANCHANABURI PROVINCE, THAILAND**

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ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional study utilizes the 2000-2004 panel data of the Kanchanaburi Demographic Surveillance System to explore patterns of health care utilization among ethnic groups, and to investigate the extent to which differences in reported use of health care results from different underlying characteristics of each ethnic group on the Thailand-Myanmar border. A total of 57.7 percent of ethnic Thai, 42.9 percent of the native-born ethnic minority populations, and 27.5 percent of the foreign-born minority populations reported that they had received medical treatment from health service providers in June 2000 when they were ill. The foreign-born minority and native-born minority were significantly less likely to have received treatment than Thais after controlling for type of self-reported illness. However, the ethnic gap in utilization of health care disappeared when the characteristics of each ethnic group were the same, in terms of age, type of self-reported illness, health insurance, religion, receiving health information from a health officer, availability of a Tambon health center and bus route in a village, and type of village. Age and type of self-reported illness were also not significantly different among ethnic groups. The results suggest that utilization of health care services was not equal among ethnic groups in the border areas. Health insurance system, reducing cultural barriers, communication between patients and health service providers, and community resources for health care can mitigate the effect of ethnicity on health care utilization.

KEY WORDS: ETHNIC GROUP/UTILIZATION OF HEALTH CARE

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