THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS STUDY WAS TO FIND OUT HOW STROKES AMONG FARMERS HAPPENED UNDER THE TRANSITION TO CAPITALIST MODES OF PRODUCTION.

A qualitative case study was carried out in Kien Giang Province, Southern Vietnam, from June 10th to August 10th, 2007. In-depth interviews and participant observation was done with ten farmers who had suffered strokes and ten of their family members at their house and the Neurological Ward of the General Hospital, Traditional Hospital.

It was found that the strokes of these small landholders or farmers and landless farm workers were related to the capitalist system. The small landholders were under severe stress due to economic hardship, threat of losing their land and property because of high interest rates, high cost of production, low price of products, and the uncertainty of the weather and farm outputs. Also, they needed to make good produce. Therefore, they worked hard in every step of the production process to ensure the products would grow properly and would not be destroyed by animals or bad environment. This made them more stressed. The landless workers also had to work hard, regardless of small wages, for the welfare of their family members. They worked for long hours under their bosses’ control and the severe working conditions of the rice fields.

All these farmers dealt with shortage of income, stress, body pain and sleeplessness by drinking, smoking, working late, taking painkillers and eating preserved or salty food with large amounts of rice. As a result, they developed high blood pressure and were unable to access proper care. Finally, they had a stroke.

KEY WORDS: STROKE/STROKE RISK FACTORS/STRESS/ VIETNAMESE FARMER/ CAPITALIST MODES OF PRODUCTION

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