

**SUBJECTIVE COMMON HEALTH COMPLAINTS, SUFFERINGS
AND HELP SEEKING BEHAVIOURS AMONG MYANMAR
FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS IN KANCHANABURI,
THAILAND**



AKARI MYO

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AKARI MYO 5537790 SHHS/M

M.A. (HEALTH SOCIAL SCIENCE)

THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: VANAWIPHA PANSANDHANATORN, Ph.D., PENCHEN SHERERE, Ph.D., NATTHANI MEEMON, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

As the migration process is one of the most prominent evolutions in globalization and it offers women new opportunities to improve their status within their home and communities, it create a new challenges for the destination countries' health systems and adapt to remain responsive to the diverse needs and social cultural contexts, particularly women health concerns.

This study aimed to explore subjective common health complaints and sufferings of Myanmar female migrant workers and to investigate health seeking behaviors and their barriers in seeking health care. Interpretive medical anthropology was used to understand the subjective health complaints in their daily lives, including their health seeking experiences. Ethnographic research design was employed for 4 months in field work in Kanchanaburi, Thailand. Twelve Myanmar women migrants working in palm oil and rubber oil farms and 6 key-informants had in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

The findings showed that Myanmar female migrant workers experienced a multiple of health complaints and sufferings due to their vulnerable social and cultural contexts that included (1) their hard, dangerous and dirty works, (2) their local beliefs about illnesses, (3) women's role in the family and abuse,(4) inaccessibility to health care services and systems. Despite facing such health problems, they tended to keep quiet due to their lack of knowledge of their rights, fear of authority and they solved problems by (i) self-medication with readymade combined drug packages or herbs and traditional medicines, (ii) spiritual and folk healers, fortune tellers and astrologers, (iii) attending private clinics or larger provincial hospitals incur debts and unbearable conditions, and (iv) occasionally going back to their home country to find solutions.

Given the health complaints and suffering among Myanmar women migrant workers, comprehensive social and health systems protection intervention are needed concerning their subjective complaints and sufferings under their vulnerable conditions. Sensitive and flexible provision of health care services is suggested to provide more efficient health care and effectiveness for the sake of the women's wellbeing in order to be prosperous in the communities of every society.

KEY WORDS: MIGRANTS/WOMEN/WORKERS/SUBJECTIVE COMPLAINTS SUFFERINGS AND HELP SEEKINGS/DETERMINENTS

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