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DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THAI ALCOHOLIC PATIENTS

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ABSTRACT

This Study was a hospital-based, descriptive study among 213 alcoholic patients, from 7 hospitals in Bangkok. The method of data collection was questionnaire interviewing, by trained personnels, one was responsible in each hospital.

Most of the patients were male, male to female ratio was 12.3 : 1. One hundred and eighty-five patients (88.6%) graduated from secondary school or lower. Their means \pm S.D. of age at onset of alcohol drinking was 21.8 ± 7.4 years, average age of males was younger than females. The social factors such as peer pressure, or their social activities, was the main cause that initiated them to drink alcohol. And the development of both psychological and physiological dependence on alcohol was the mechanism that perpetuated them to maintain their drinking. The average duration of their drinking behavior was more than 20 years, and they have experienced consequences related to their

alcohol drinking for 6.9 ± 6.6 years in average, mainly to their health.

One hundred and thirty six patients (63.8%) voluntarily received treatment. Their motivation towards abstinence was due to the awareness of alcohol-related consequences. About half of them (49.3%) ever had detoxification treatment before, but relapsed to drinking again because of physiological and psychological dependence symptoms and social influences.

The analysis of subgroup, found a significant association between drinking behavior of their fathers and the drinking behavior of their relatives, either siblings, grandparents, uncles or aunts. The female patients had significantly higher proportion of broken marriage than male patients. And male patients started their drinking behavior earlier than females significantly.

The recommendations from the results of study are that the efforts of prevention and control programmes should be emphasized on primary prevention. The health education and law enforcement might be used as an effective prevention and control measure respectively. The interventions should be implemented directly to the risk groups such as male, and low educated teenagers. In treatment programme, it should composed of both detoxification and rehabilitation phases, in order to treat and help them to maintain their motivation towards abstinence.

The role of genetic influences in the developmental process of alcoholism is suggested in the result of this study, but it should be more deeply investigated.