

Abstract

Nowadays the number of persons with disabilities is growing every year. At the same time, there are a lot of limitations on rehabilitation for people with disabilities. Specifically, persons with disabilities cannot access rehabilitation because there is not enough physiotherapists and some places do not have physiotherapist in the community. Moreover, it might possible that people in the community do not realize, lack of knowledge and do not sufficiently understand the importance of physical therapy in the rehabilitation of persons with disability. These are the causes of our present study; to investigate the attitude and perception of community leaders, person with physical disabilities and their families on the role and responsibilities of physiotherapy in their community. This study was a focus group with two groups of people in the community interviewed by group discussion. The first group was composed of community leaders in the administrative organization and health care provider communities. The second group was person with physical disabilities and their families. Each group was interviewed three times, in the three sub-districts, of Tha Kun, Don Tako and Poe Thong, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat province. The number of community leaders for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd interviews were 8, 8 and 9 persons, respectively. The number of person with physical disabilities and their families for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd interviews was 8, 12 and 9 persons, respectively. The results showed that community leaders, person with physical disabilities and their families understand the role and responsibility of physiotherapy in their community and also insist that physiotherapy play an importance role for person with physical disabilities in the community. This was most of them had worked with and received treatment from physiotherapists. However, there is still limited accessibility of physical therapy resources for persons with physical disabilities. Therefore, most of participants suggested that there should be more support for physiotherapy to fully time's work at the District Health Promotion Hospital or in the community. To

achieve this, the community should support a fund for students to study physiotherapy. In addition, the public health ministry should support more positions and/ or a larger budget for the employment of physiotherapists to work in the community. This might causes help decrease the budget from the District Health Promotion Hospital or the Subdistrict Administration Organization. Future study should look into the role of physiotherapy in the community to clarify the duties, responsibilities, problems or obstacles including the evidence of successful physiotherapists in community.