

Thesis Title A Study of the Indicators of
Coverage by Primary Health Care:
A Case Study in Chonburi, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

A cross-sectional study was done in 4 villages of Chonburi province with the objective of studying the extent of coverage by Primary Health Care through the study of the levels of selected indicators of Primary Health Care. The indicators used, as was set by the World Health Organization were "Level of Health Literacy", "Provision of Sanitary Facilities and Water Supply", "Provision of Essential Drugs

Throughout the year", "Access to Health Care", "Birth Attendance by Health Personnel", and "Percentage of Children Immunized Against Common Infectious Diseases of Childhood". The other 2 indicators, namely "Ratio of population to the different PHC workers at the referral levels" and "Accessibility of referral institutions", were not used in this study since criteria for the PHC workers, and explicit guidelines regarding population to health personnel ratio were still wanting. There were no criteria set in the selection of study villages since this study was based on the premise that health is a basic human right and that coverage by Primary Health Care should be universal. Two hundred forty five villagers were interviewed by trained interviewers using a structured questionnaire.

It was found that there was a significant difference in the levels of the indicators among the four study villages. Level of health literacy, access to health care, and availability of essential drugs were highest in village 1, while level of sanitation was highest in village 4. Village 3 was lowest in 3 indicators (sanitation, access, and essential drugs), while village 2 faired lowest in health literacy.

It is interesting to note that almost all of the households (96 %) had and used sanitary latrines. However half of them still get drinking water from open dug wells despite the strong government support in the form of provision of giant water jars for rain water. This was apparently due to level of health literacy which showed only 56 % with high levels across the 4 villages. Furthermore, it was noted that although a good 78 % of the villagers live within 30 minutes walk/ride to the health center, and another 18 % live not more than 1 hour walk/ride, health center utilization was only 58%.

It was found that 100 % of the deliveries during the past year were attended by health personnel (44 % by Midwife/Nurse of the Health Center and 56 % by hospital staff).

Immunization coverage was 73.3 % across the 4 villages for fully immunized children.

Regarding availability of drugs, 67 % of the community identified the health center as source of drugs while only 2 % identified the Village Drug Fund. Other sources identified were the drugstore in the village, District hospital/pharmacy, and provincial hospital/

pharmacy. Almost all of the villagers (90 %) said that medicine for simple diseases were always available in the villages.

Factors which were significantly associated with the levels of indicators were demographic variables education, length of residence in the village, occupation, and income. Attitude of the community towards health personnel, and visit by the Midwife/Nurse to the villages were also significantly associated with the levels of the indicators.