

***Needs and Health Problems of the Elderly in Perspective of the Family
Care Giver in the Community***

Umaporn Kensila, Khon Kaen University, Thailand
Piyathida Kuhirunyratn, Khon Kaen University, Thailand

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Abstract

This study is qualitative study aims to examine the elderly needs and health problems of the elderly in perspective of the family care givers in the community of Udon Thani Province, Thailand. This study in-depth interviewed with 5 family caregivers. The major finding can be summarized as follow: the health problems of the elderly were needed to care by the family caregivers which inadequate of knowledge to care, in corrected practice and less awareness on self care for the elderly. This study also found the gratitude of their children is one of the elderly need which is a key of a strong family caregivers to take care of their elderly members although in their busy part. In conclusion, this study reveals the elderly needs and health problems depend on health condition of the elderly. Elderly care knowledge training was needed for family caregiver and enhancing in attitude for gratitude in family is also needed.

Keywords: health problems; elderly; family care givers

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Introduction

The world's population is ageing rapidly. Between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of the world's older adults is estimated to almost double from about 12% to 22%. In absolute terms, this is an expected increase from 900 million to 2 billion people over the age of 60 (WHO, 2015).

In Thailand, a developing country in Southeast Asia, the population of Thai elderly over the age of 60 has been almost doubling every 20 years, going from 3,300,000 in 2010, to 11,600,000 in 2042 (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2013). This dramatic increase in the elderly population in Thailand will have important implications for the distribution of resources.

Health problems are an unwelcome accompaniment to advancing age for the majority of older people. Most suffer from a variety of symptoms and at least one chronic disease. Elderly in the community who need help in order to remain outside an institution are estimated to receive from 80% to 90% of all care from their family members. Thus, it is clear that the family remains a major source of support to the elderly through the vicissitudes of old age.

Thai culture indicated that social support among the elderly and their families is an obligation. Social support occurs in terms of caring for parents and supports all kinds of family activities (Kuhirunyratn et al, 2007), that family members are the most important source of help and support from informal networks.

The aim of present study of Aging is natural process which unique occurred in the old age population. This study aims to examine the elderly needs and health problems of the elderly in perspective of the family care givers in the community.

Materials and Methods

Study design: This study is qualitative study

Study setting: Udon Thani province, Northeast, Thailand.

Population and sample: Sample included 5 family caregivers, living in communities in Udon Thani Province.

Tool: This study using a structured interview.

Data collection: Data were collected through in-depth interviewed with 5 family caregivers who experiences to care the elderly for more than 1 year, age 18 and over year of age in Municipality of Udon Thani Province, Thailand.

Data analysis: Data analyzed using a content analysis.

Results

This study in-depth interviewed with 5 family caregivers due to the data saturated. The results showed needs and health problems of the elderly into 3 themes; the health problems of the elderly were needed to care by the family caregivers which inadequate of knowledge to care, in corrected practice and less awareness on self care for the elderly. The health problems were fall into both physical and mental and some of the elderly enable in practicing activities of daily living and decreasing for social activities. This study also found the gratitude of their children is one of the elderly need which is a key of a strong family caregivers to take care of their elderly members although in their busy part.

Perspective of the family caregiver

There are two viewpoints, "Gratitude" and "Burden" (depending on the consequences). "Burden" means the burden of disease that cautions us that something is going to happen in the body.

Caregiver burden:

Caregiver burden is a multidimensional phenomenon reflecting the physical, emotional, social and environmental consequences of caring for an impaired family member. The examination of caregiver burden is critical to service providers who work with families in communities. In addition, relatively few studies in Thailand have examined the multiple factors associated with caregiver burden, such as perceived social support, depression and caregiver's quality of life.

Gratitude of their family caregivers:

"When my father is in sick, I am also in sick and want to be in sick instead of my father and mother. It is not good, because sick makes us suffer in our body and mind.

The health problems of the elderly were needed to care by the family caregivers which inadequate of knowledge to care.

"I want to training and learning about basic knowledge for elderly care"

"I want the doctors and nurses to pay more attention, when I go to tell them my mother is in pain"

In corrected practice

"I don't know what to do when my mother have some symptoms example; she has hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia"

Less awareness on self care for the elderly

"My mother she has underlying is diabetic and hypertension, But she never control blood sugar and she eat everything she need"

The anticipated continuing demand for family care means that caregivers' needs and perspectives need to be integrated into future service planning and decision-making processes.

Conclusion

This study reveals the elderly needs and health problems depend on health condition of the elderly. Elderly care knowledge training was needed for family caregiver and enhancing in attitude for gratitude in family is also needed. Family is a major resource of support for Thai elderly.

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For further information:

Umaporn Kensila, Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, 40002, Thailand; Email: nurse_ckr@hotmail.com