

*Media Exposure and Health Behaviors of Menopausal Woman
in Ranong Province, Thailand*

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between media exposure and health behaviors among menopausal women in Ranong Province, south of Thailand. The primary objectives of the research involve analyzing the association between media exposure and health behavior among 375 menopausal female patients who sought medical assistance at Ranong Hospital, Thailand in 2022. The results indicate significant positive correlations ($p < 0.01$) between education, income, knowledge about menopause, and attitude toward health. Specifically, the patients' level of education and knowledge about menopause displayed a low correlation ($r = .228$ and $r = .222$, respectively), while income and health attitude exhibited a moderate correlation ($r = .583$ and $r = .454$, respectively). Conversely, marital status, recognition of barriers to disease control, and online media behavior demonstrated negative correlations with health behavior. Moreover, recognizing the risk and severity of diseases, as well as understanding the benefits of disease control, exhibited no correlation with health behaviors. Consequently, the research suggests that despite menopausal women dedicating a significant amount of time to consuming health-related media, this exposure does not necessarily translate into improved health behavior. Therefore, there is a need for increased dissemination of knowledge to ensure that menopausal women can effectively care for their health. Additionally, enhancing health media literacy skills is crucial to enable menopausal women to discern accurate information from misinformation.

Keywords: Health Behavior, Health Media Exposure, Thailand

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Introduction

At present, there is a discernible rise in the population of menopausal women. Statistical data reveals a consistent increase in this demographic over time. In 2000, the percentage stood at 7.49%, escalating to 10.53% in 2010, and further rising to 12.19% by 2020. The Office of Reproductive Health, Thailand (2020) reports that the average life expectancy of Thai women is 75 years. This implies that menopausal women might spend approximately 25 years, or one-third of their lifespan, navigating through the menopausal phase.

When entering menopausal period, a woman's body stops ovulation and experiences a reduction in the production of female hormones (such as estrogen and progesterone). This decrease affects the functionality of various bodily systems in menopausal women. Consequently, the body undergoes a state of decline, leading to the onset of health issues. Individuals may begin to suffer from several chronic diseases (Thai Health Foundation, 2021). Additionally, the access of Thai people to the healthcare system was not comprehensive, resulting in menopausal women not experiencing a high quality of life before reaching old age.

Interestingly, an increasing number of women are seeking support through social media as they go through menopause (PatientMetRx, 2023). This raises the question: Does the use of media by menopausal women influence their health behavior?

Therefore, the objective of this research is to study the media exposure and health behavior of menopausal women as well as investigate the relationship between health behaviors and media exposure among menopausal women in Ranong, Thailand.

Review of Literature

Health communication refers to the operation of two-way communication between the message receiver and the sender, which opens opportunities for the public to access health information easily and widely (Gochman, 1988). It involves the collaborative organization of knowledge and the exchange of learning within communities. It encompasses mutual communication that believes in people being both message senders and receivers, ready to accept others' opinions and willingly exchange their knowledge and experiences with others. This aligns with Article 47(9) of the draft National Health Act of 2007, which states that knowledge and health information are fundamental factors of the national health system. It mandates the creation and dissemination of health knowledge to enable the public to access accurate information easily (Thailand Health Act, B.E. 2020).

"Health communication" is a concept that blends "communication" and "health." Therefore, health communication refers to the exchange of communication that believes in people being both message senders and receivers, ready to accept others' opinions and willing to exchange their knowledge and experiences with others (Pajaree Thanasonburi, 2008). The aim of health communication is to transform the social environment to promote healthy behaviors, create awareness, change attitudes, and motivate the application of knowledge into practice (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2010). In this process, both dissemination and communication are crucial. Health communication applies the two-way communication process to health communication because it is perceived as more effective and sustainable.

The goal of health communication is to enable self-reliance and mutual support among the population to the fullest extent possible. A crucial focal point is the utmost importance of credibility and accuracy of health content, as well as the channels for communicating and accessing health information. Given that health is a critical matter, erroneous information may lead to loss of life. Therefore, these channels must be easily accessible and widely available to the public. According to Pravat Vasi (2008) the concept of information systems and health communication is what makes individuals and different parts of society universally informed and able to communicate effectively. This is especially vital for the healthcare system since communication is a fundamental component in its development. A robust healthcare system starts with a solid foundation, and that foundation begins with self-reliance (Pravat Vasi, 2008).

Siriwan Wiboonchan (2002) conducted a study on the relationship between information-seeking behavior and self-care for menopausal women. The study found that the majority of older women held attitudes that were moderately suitable regarding their aging status. They had an understanding of how to conduct themselves upon entering this phase of life and exhibited a reasonably adequate level of self-care. Moreover, the study revealed that most older women displayed highly appropriate behaviors in self-care practices for their health.

Iriyaporn Udata and Arichai Arrakudom (2017) conducted a study on the online health communication strategies through the Facebook media of Phayathai Hospital. The study found that the online health communication strategies through Phayathai Hospital's Facebook content aimed to provide knowledge to everyone, both the targeted and non-targeted groups. The scope of presenting online health communication strategies aimed to raise awareness of the importance of health communication, which was previously perceived as distant. When Thailand faced epidemic situations or emergencies, people experienced distress when aiding others in urgent situations and various other incidents. Consequently, the targeted groups were unable to perform correctly by themselves. However, basic medical knowledge and understanding of health through online communication via Facebook reduced panic and allowed for a more composed approach to self-care or aiding others promptly.

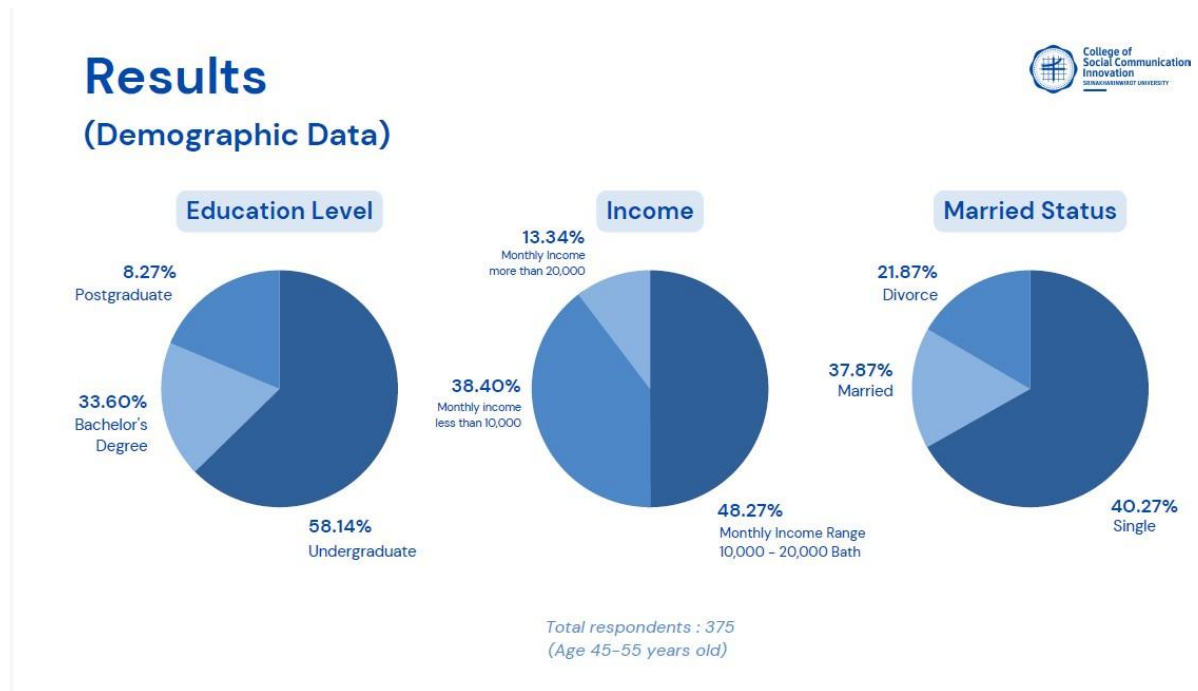
Methodology

Samples were selected by purposive and random sampling methods from the menopausal population in Ranong Province, Thailand. The sample size was 375 menopausal females. The research tool was a questionnaire created by the researcher.

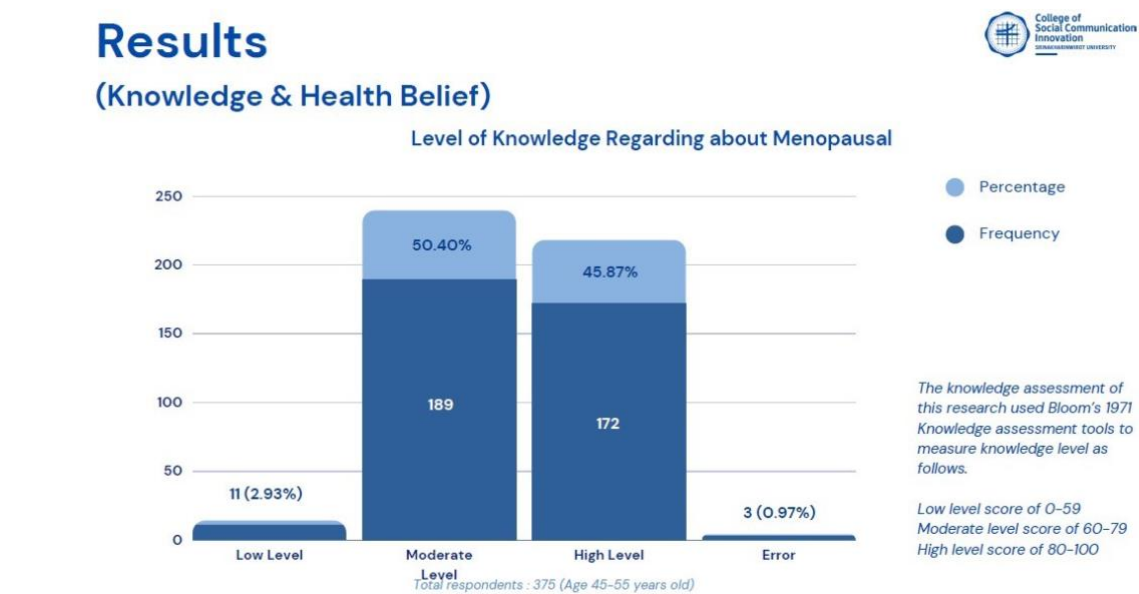
Data Analysis

Demographic data was described with descriptive Statistics such as frequency distribution and percentage. The Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to analyze the relationship between media exposure and health behavior.

Results



Picture 1. Demographic data.



Picture 2. Relationship between knowledge & health belief.

The results show that the majority of the respondents 58.14 % hold a high school certificate, while 33.60 % hold a bachelor's degree, and 23.47 % hold a vocational certificate. In terms of their monthly incomes, 48.27 % have had a monthly income of 10,001 - 20,000 Baht, followed by 38.40 % who earn less than 10,000 Baht as shown in picture 1.

Picture 2 showed that knowledge and Health Belief among menopausal women was found to be at a low level of 2.93%, at a moderate level, 50.40%, at a high level, 45.87%.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation (S.D), Health Consciousness, Health Belief, Media Exposure, and Health Behavior of Menopausal Woman

Variable	WAI	S.D.	Level
Health Consciousness	3.08	0.56	Moderate
Perceived Susceptibility	4.39	0.57	High
Perceived Severity	4.27	0.61	High
Perceived Benefit	4.29	0.56	High
Perceived Barrier	3.27	0.22	Moderate
Online Media Exposer	3.77	0.77	High
Offline Media Exposer	2.62	0.57	Moderate
Menopausal Woman Health Behavior	2.98	0.47	Moderate

Table 2. Relation Between variable to health behavior of menopausal woman

Variable	Health Behavior of Menopausal Woman		
	R	Level of Relation	P-Value
Education level	0.28	Low	0.01
Married Status	0.271	Negative	0.01
Income	0.583	Moderate	0.01
Level of Knowledge about Menopausal Health Consciousness	0.222	Low	0.01
Health Consciousness	0.454	Moderate	0.01
Perception of Risk of Disease Incidence	0.288	No Relation	0.053
Perception to Severity of Disease	0.772	No Relation	0.15
Benefit of Diseases Controlled Perception	0.309	No relation	0.053
Disease Protection Obstacle	0.106	Negative	0.041
Online Media Use	0.329	Negative	0.01
Offline Media use	0.170	No relation	0.01

The education level and level of knowledge about menopausal health consciousness had a significant statically low relationship to the health behavior of menopausal women, ($p=0.01$). Monthly income and health consciousness were significantly related to the health behavior of their women too, ($p=0.01$). There was significant no relation between perception to risk of disease, perception to severity of disease, benefit of disease controlled perception, and offline media use to health behavior. Marriage status, disease protection obstacle, and online media use was significantly and negatively related to health behavior.

Conclusion

Half of menopausal women was perceived during the menopausal period. Almost all of the menopausal sample used online media at a high level and used offline media at a moderate level. The education level, level of knowledge about menopausal health consciousness, and health consciousness were statistically related to the health behavior of menopausal woman.

The research suggests that despite menopausal women dedicating a significant amount of time to consuming health-related media, this exposure does not necessarily translate into improved health behavior. Therefore, there is a need for increased dissemination of

knowledge to ensure that menopausal women can effectively care for their health. Additionally, enhancing health media literacy skills is crucial to enable menopausal women to discern accurate information from misinformation.

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