

Abstract

Subject Social Support for the Elderly (Southern Area Study)
Researcher Associate Professor Sasipat Yodpet, Assistant Professor Lek Sombat,
Assistant Professor Bhawana Phathanasri
Supporter Thai Study Institute, Thammasat University
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Research Results

The study on "Social Support for the Elderly (Southern Area Study)" aims at examining the current living conditions of the elderly, types and characteristics of social support for the elderly, various social welfare services that the elderly frequently used, level of satisfaction with and expectations for services provided by the government and the non-governmental organizations. The sample of 250 people, aged 55 years and above, was selected through a multistage random sampling technique. They are living in Amphur Hua Sai and Amphur Na Bon, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, as well as Amphur Muang and Amphur Khuan Ka Long, Satun Province. Data collecting comprises the quantitative method by questionnaire and the qualitative method by focus group discussion and in-depth interview.

The study finds that 52.4 percent of the elderly is 70-74 year-old women. They are Buddhist and primary school educated. Most of them are married and live with their husbands and offspring. The average amount of money they received from various sources is around 501-1,500 Baht per month. The majority of them are as healthy as those of their age groups. Most of them participate in social activities and are members of several social groups. With regard to the social support for the elderly, they receive mental and emotional support from the people around them, especially members of the family, neighbours and relatives. The elderly have to adjust themselves to the social changes that may affect their daily life so that they are not mentally and emotionally apprehensive. Their offspring provide the material needs, consumer goods and financial support to the elderly more than other types of people within the network. The need for informational support depends on the capacity and the interest of each elderly. The study shows that men are interested in searching for the information more than women. Other support includes community services and social activities. The elderly receive the aforesaid support from their community leaders, both formal and informal leaders. The social service the elderly mostly use and are satisfied with is public health care. They all expect to be healthy, to be taken care by their offspring, and to have a better quality of life.

Recommendations are that the government should enhance the policy to strengthen the community and family network so that it proceeds rapidly and effectively to deal with the problems of the elderly in the future; and at the same time, the elderly themselves should empower themselves and exercise their potential as much as possible for their own sakes.