

Abstract

Street children are categorized as an underserved group in the society. This research aims at comparing health behaviors and health care needs between adolescent street children living in the foundations and adolescent street children living in the public areas. The study sample is comprised of children ranging from 13 to 18 years of age. The 45 adolescent street children in each group were selected through purposive sampling and the snowballing technique. The research instruments included health behavior and a health care need questionnaire. The Content Validity Index was 0.88. Reliability was tested using Cronbach' Alpha, which yielded a result of 0.93 and 0.73 respectively. The results were analyzed by using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and Mann-Whitney's U test.

The research findings showed that the overall scores of health behaviors were at a moderate level. Adolescent street children living in the foundations showed a moderate to a high level, whereas the children living in public areas showed a moderate to low level. There were statistically significant differences between the mean score of the total scale and subscale of health behaviors at $p < .05$. The overall scores of the health care needs between adolescent street children were different. The foundations group perceived health care needs at the highest level and who living in public areas perceived their needs at high level. However, there were no statistically significant differences between the mean score of the total scale of health care needs at $p > .05$.

The research findings suggested that health care providers and organization at policy level should involve and have more concern about street children's health and their needs also should promote and change their health behaviors. This would enhance their quality of life in the future.