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KITTIWAN JUNRITH : THAI TRADITIONAL MEDICINE SERVICES UTILIZATION IN DISTRICT HOSPITALS, NAKHONSAWAN PROVINCE. THESIS ADVISORS : NAWARAT SUWANNAPHONG, Ph.D. (Population and Development ), CHAWEEWAN BOONSHUYAR, M.S.P.H. (Bios), CHAINAT JITWATNA, M.P.H.M. 119 p. ISBN 974-662-625-6

Thai traditional medicine is local wisdom which is a new choice for the health care of people. This plays an important role in Thai society. According to the increasing cost for curing sickness the theory of Thai traditional medicine has reached the Public Health Care center service system. This research is comparative about population characteristics, health factors, chance to get service and satisfaction with service, and the choice whether or not to return for further service in district hospitals, Nakhonsawan Province. Information about 200 patients who visited a second time for services was collected over the period of Nov.1, 1998-Jan.31, 1999 and information about 80 patients who did not return was collected from history cards.

According to the research for, both the group of patients who did and did not return for further service, most were female (70.4% and 70.0% respectively), had mean age of 45.43 and 43.39 respectively, had graduated in Bachelor level (40.0% and 39.1% respectively), were married (70.0% and 75.0% respectively), working as government officers (57.0% and 56.3% respectively) and had income more than 10,000 baht/month (44.5% and 48.8% respectively). Both groups believed that the cause of sickness is from nature (48.0% and 38.38%). Most came for service while having symptoms (76.0% and 78.0%) and used to cured from another health care institute (71.1% and 57.1%), and trusted in the result of curing (72.5% and 71.3%). The time for travelling is less than 30 min. (89.0% and 83.8%), the distance travelled is less than 10 kms (52.5% and 72.5%). Patients decided by their own and travelled comfortably to get curing service (98.0% and 90.0%). The group of returning patients had medium level of satisfaction 60.5% while the group of non-returning patients had low satisfaction level 50.0%. The comparison between the distance travelled to get curing service, the experience about getting curing, the suitability of service payment and the satisfaction from getting services in both groups were found to be significantly different at  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ . The factors which distinguish the group returning for service are the satisfaction about the quality of service, suitability cost of curing, the length of time of sickness and the satisfaction in the behavior of the officers. These can predict returning for services correctly 77.5%. The results of this research can be used to improve Thai traditional medicine services by adding officers in order to be enough for the patients, reducing the cost of herbal production in order to sell at a low price. Hospitals should promote local production of herbal medicine in the community. Service behaviors of public health officers should be improved so more people will come to receive Thai traditional medicine services.