

Thesis Title            The Referral of Pregnant Women and Parturients  
                         of Community Hospitals and Health Centers in  
                         Satul Province

Name                    Wong    Doeypila

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                         Population Planning)

Thesis Supervisory Committee

                         Winit   Phuapradit,M.D.,Thai Board of Ob-Gyn.  
                         M.P.H.

                         Surakiat   Achananuparp,M.D.,M.P.H.(Health  
                         Development)

                         Prasit   Pongruengphant,B.Ed.,M.Ed.

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### Abstract

The referral system should improve the efficiency and effectiveness of maternal and child health care services. But some of this information or research is unavailable. The objectives of this retrospective study were to discover the number of referred pregnant women and parturients of the community hospitals and the health centers, the causes of referral, the pregnancy outcomes, (type of delivery, conditions of mothers and babies), the factors which influenced referral and to compare the different level of referral and type of delivery. Data was collected from referral

forms of the 5 community hospitals/extended OPD, the 34 health centers in Satul province between October 1, 1989 to September 30, 1991. All data were analyzed by percentage occurrence, rate, Chi-square test and Fisher's Exact test. Differences were considered significant at a level of  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$

There were 416 referred women (483 times), of whom 215 women (237 times) were referred during pregnancy and 246 women during labour and postpartum. The referral rates of pregnant women and parturients were 3.2% and 11.5% respectively. The referral rates of pregnant women and parturients of the community hospital/extended OPD were 3.2 % and 6.6 %, and the health centers were 3.3 % and 18.2 % respectively.

Most of the referred women were between 17-35 years old (82.9%), and primipara (31.3 %). The incidences of abnormal labour were higher for referred women age over 35 years old or multipara (more than 4 previous births) when compared with other groups.

The main reasons of referral during pregnancy and parturition of the community hospital/extended OPD were abortion (24.6 %) and prolonged labour (24.2 %) respectively, the health centers' referrals were due to patients' request during pregnancy (26.6 %) and during labour (38.0 %).

Most of the referred parturients of the health centers had normal delivery (72.9 %), while those of the community hospitals/extended OPD had abnormal delivery (60.8 %). There

was one maternal death (0.4 %), and 8 perinatal deaths (3.4 %), all of which were stillbirths.

Most of the referred women were referred routinely to upper level of health care (96.3%). When comparing the level of referral and type of delivery, abnormal delivery rate among the referral to short cutting level of health care was significantly higher than referral to routine level of health care ( $P < 0.05$ ).

The distance (distance from health center to community /general hospital) of the referred pregnant women was divided into two groups i.e. near and far. Referral rate of pregnant women was higher among health centers in the far group when compared with the near group ( $P < 0.05$ ), but for the referral rate during labour the reverse relationship was found with statistically significance ( $P < 0.05$ ).

The referral rates of pregnant women and parturients among health card holders were significantly more than non card holders ( $P < 0.05$ ).

The results of this study could be applied for improving the referral system in Satul province, particularly the referral in health card program.