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SUMALEE WONGCHAROENKUL : SOCIAL NETWORK AND SOCIAL SUPPORT RELATED TO LIFE MAINTENANCE OF THE ELDERLY IN A LOW - INCOME SETTLEMENT OF BANGKOK. THESIS ADVISOR : ORATHAI ARD - AM, B.A. , M.S. , KUSOL SOONTHORNDHADA, M.A. , Ph.D. , ANTHONY PRAMUALRATANA, M.A. , Ph.D. 90 p. ISBN 974 - 589 - 131 - 2

The purpose of this study was to analyse the impact of social network and social support on life maintenance, expectations, attitudes and needs of the elderly (age more than 60 years) in a low - income settlement of Bangkok. The study was conducted on 18 members of the elderly using different methods i.e. general observations, participant observation, informal interview and indepth interview.

The finding of this study indicated that the elderly of the first group who have social network and social support were satisfied with the present life. Most of them already ceased their career. In the second group, elderly with social network but without social support, had less favourable life than the first group. However, the second group was satisfied more with their past than the present. Some of them stopped their careers; some continued in order to earn an income for their life maintenance. The last group of elderly who had neither social network nor social support, had the highest degree of unpleasant life. This group preferred their life in the past more than the present life. The elderly in the last group needed to work in order to maintain their life more than their counterparts in the first two groups. In sum, we can conclude that all of the three groups had different life maintenance which were related to social support and social network. However, all elderly still had a common characteristic which was a health problem.

The intimate social network having an important role in social support was the families, relatives, friends, neighbours, community leader and community members respectively. This study showed that the social network had an important role in social support and very much related to life maintenance and quality of life of the elderly in the community under study.