

Thesis Title A Study on Health Service Seeking Process of Women With Diabetes Mellitus in the Western Region

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Abstract

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic disease that revealed statistical increased in women. One of the important problem in caring for the women with diabetes mellitus is that most of them have developed complications before seeking health service from hospitals.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the process of health service seeking of women with diabetes mellitus. The sample consisted of 200 women with diabetes mellitus receiving health care service at the diabetes mellitus clinic in the Out Patient Department as well as female diabetes mellitus patients admitted to diabetes mellitus wards at government hospitals in the western region of Thailand. The data were collected by the investigator. Data were analysed by grouping and presented in quanlitative styles. The results were as follow:

1. The majority of subjects (90.5%) were older than 40 years, married (65.5%), primary education level (70.5%), no occupation (60.5%), 29.0% of the subjects earned income between 1,001 - 3,000 baht per month. More than half of the subjects (55.5%) performed three-four roles. Fifty-three percent have had diabetes mellitus for one to five years.

2. Health service seeking process covered 3 steps as follow:

step 1. Illness Recognition, Symptom Definition and Management. Health service seeking process starts as early as they realized that something has gone wrong ie. polyuria (73.5%), polydipsia (46.0%), fatigue (35.5%), and weight loss(27.5%). Most of the symptoms occured in combination of many symptom together. In defining of the symptom, 35% of the

women noticed unusual symptoms occurred but did not know of what they indicated. Only 11% of the subjects suspected they had diabetes mellitus. The management of the noticed symptoms depended upon their own thinking. Almost half of the subjects waited and saw before taking further step of treatment (53.0%). 35.0 percent performed self treatment. After that they were advised by others. The study also revealed that family members were the largest group (66.9%) of people whom the subjects turned to for advice and played the most important roles in the decisions made by the subjects regarding health service seeking.

step 2. Selection of Health Service Agency. The women went to different agencies for health service prior to coming to the present hospitals. Those agencies were private clinics (41.4%), community hospital (17.2%) and only 3.6% went to traditional medical centers. The reasons underlying the selection of health service agencies were the suggestion from others, and in some cases transportation accessibility.

step 3. Evaluation and Changing of Health Service Agency. In an evaluation of the health care service, the subjects were evaluated prior to coming to the present hospital. The study revealed that the subjects knew from the results of the symptoms that after treatment they were moderately better (68.2%). The underlying reason for their decision in changing from previous agency to the present hospital were the high cost of service (28.6%), and in some cases "getting worse" (26.6%).

From the result of the study, the investigator suggested that nurses and health personnel need to provide knowledge and information regarding diabetes mellitus to women and their families. The government health center units should plan health service to be accessible and efficient for the women to get appropriate health service at an early phase of disease.