

Thesis Title                    A Study on Health Service Seeking Process of Women With Cervical  
Cancer in Bangkok

Name                            Walaipun Cholsuk

Degree                          Master of Nursing Science (Adult Nursing)

Thesis Supervisory Committee

Jariyawat Kompayak, B.Ed., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.

Sirion      Sindhu, B.Ed., M.Sc., D.N.Sc.

Atirat      Wattanapailin, B.Ed., M.Ed., D.Ed.

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## ABSTRACT

Cervical cancer is the most common malignancy in female, it is curable with early detection. The critical problem noted was that most patients sought proper management only when the disease was in the advanced stage. The purpose of this study was to investigate the health service seeking process of women with cervical cancer in Bangkok. Subjects studied were 120 women who were diagnosed and who received treatment for cervical cancer in 4 hospitals in Bangkok from January 1997 to March 1997. The data was collected using semi-structured interview guidelines which was constructed by the investigator. Data was analyzed by grouping and presented in qualitative styles. The results were as follows :

The subjects came from various regions of the country, most were between age 45 - 64 years (59.2%), married (65.0%), primary education level (65.5%), monthly income between 1,000-4,000 bath (47.4%), working women (69.2%), first sexual intercourse before 20 years (48.7%), 4 - 6 pregnancies (42.5%), deliveries by traditional method (49.5%).

Three phases in the process of health service seeking were as follows:

First phase: health service seeking process before there were any symptoms. Most of the subjects had already received information about Pap smear testing (63.3%), from health care personnel (48.7%), never had screening with Pap test (55.3%), and irregular screening with Pap test because it was embarrassing(48.4%).

Second phase: health service seeking process from the time symptoms occurred to diagnosis. Four symptoms were recognized by subjects(90%), most were vaginal bleeding (55.6%) and leukorrhea (35.2%). They defined these symptoms as "pre or post menopause" (29.6%), "uterine infection" (14.8%), "normal female symptoms"(13.9%) etc.. All subjects who observed their symptoms consulted their family first (62.0%). For the selection of health service agencies, most subjects sought advice from family members, friends and neighbourhood (50.0%), chose private clinics(41.8%) and changed service agencies because the symptoms were not improved(41.8%).

Third phase: health seeking service process from initial diagnosis to the current hospital. The 4 diagnosis recognized by subjects were cervical cancer (87.5%), cervical tumor (6.7%), cervical ulceration(4.2%) and vaginal bleeding disorder(1.6%). Most of the subjects felt that cervical cancer was terrible(52.6%). For the selection of health service agencies, most subjects decided to get treatment in general hospitals(28.3%), some subjects were treated by herbs (11.7%), changed the health service agencies because the doctor advised and sent them to the current hospital on a referral system (76.5%). At the current hospital, the subjects waited to see the doctor from 30 minutes to 4 hours, most subjects recognized that they had to wait for a long time but they did. For treatment, most subjects met the doctors for approximately 3 - 5 minutes(74.2%) and recognized that the treatment made them feel better (35.5%), cost of the service ranging 80 - 40,000 baht each visit.

As a result of the study, the investigator suggest that all nurse be responsible for providing education a bout cervical cancer. Emphasis should be given, in particular, to women even age 30 - 35 years, who have had sexual intercourse. Emphasis on the important of early screening and early detection.