

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out about the prevalence of mental health problems, the type of mental health problems, learning problems and the relationship between mental health problems and learning problems in the students in the early years of primary education

The study was done during the years 1978-1980 on the study samples drawn from the first grade and second grade from 4 schools in Songkhla province. They were:- 153 students from Wat-Kohk-Samankun School, 154 students from Ban-nam-noi School, 299 students from Haadyai-Amnuayvit School, and 606 students from Engsiang-Samakki Municipal School.

The survey on the mental health problems was done by screening questionnaires filled by the students' parents and teachers. Those whose questionnaires indicated suspected mental health problems were given a complete psychiatric examination by a psychiatrist. Learning problems were roughly estimated by the students' grades in the final end of the year examination. A rough estimation of the intelligence was obtained by using Raven's Progressive Matrices Test. Students who showed poor grades in relation to their intelligence and students who were found to have neurological deficits were given Marianne Frostig Developmental Test for Visual Perception.

The findings in this study indicated that the prevalence rate of mental health problems varied from school to school. The lowest rate was 9.3 % at Engsiang-Samakki Municipal School, and the highest rate was 24.4 % at Wat-Kohk-Samankun School. About

half of the students with mental health problems suffered from adjustment reaction. At a lesser extent were neurosis and conduct disorder.

The prevalence of learning problems varied from 9.7-21.6 % However when the group of students who probably had learning problems were included the prevalence rate rose to 15.7-34.0 %

At 2 schools it was found that the prevalence of learning problems was significantly higher statistically in male students as compared with their female counter parts. The association between mental health problems and learning problems was also found to be statistically significant.

The prevalence of visual perception problems was found to have the lowest rate of 5 % at Haadyai-Amnuayvit School and the highest rate of 16.7 % at Engsiang-Samakki Municipal School. It is interesting to note that about 30-50 % of the students with learning problems suffered from visual perception problems.