

Thesis title Maternal Beliefs and Behavior on the Use of Impregnated Bednets to Prevent Malaria for Their Children in Ratchaburi Province

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of socio-behavioral background on maternal decision making in relation to the use of impregnated bednets to prevent malaria for their children. The study area was Suan Phung District, Ratchaburi Province. In 1992, the annual parasite incidence (API) in this area was 73.38 per 1000 population.

A cross-sectional survey was undertaken during March to April 1996 using structured interview schedules and unstructured indepth interviews as the method of data collection. The sample comprised 184 mothers and caretakers, with children under 11 years old, from 10 hamlets in Suan Phung District, all of whom had bednets impregnated with insecticide. The Health Belief Model was modified as the framework for this study. The data were analyzed using descriptive and bivariate statistics, with the chi-square test for hypotheses.

It was found that most mothers had low socio-economic status with about half receiving no formal education. Almost all the mothers were satisfied with motherhood and seemed to have a positive attitude toward their children, as a future asset from which they could receive such benefit as old age support and continuity of the family

name. More than half of the mothers perceived susceptibility and severity of malaria as a risk to their children, which might even cause death. Most mothers perceived, and had positive attitudes toward, impregnated bednets as protection for their children. However, there were quite a number of mothers still uncertain as to whether it was safe for their children. Most mothers recognized mosquito bite as a factor causing malaria and sleeping under impregnated bednets as method of malaria prevention. Three-quarters (76.4%) of them used impregnated bednets regularly for their children, whereas one-quarter (23.6%) used them infrequently and 3.3% never used them.

Bivariate analysis showed that the use of impregnated bednets was significantly related to factors such as perception of benefits of use, the receipt of information from malaria workers, personal experience of the effects of malaria, and had knowledge of malaria prevention. The results indicated that mothers who perceived the considerable benefits of using impregnated bednets, experience of the effect of malaria and knowledge of malaria and malaria prevention were more likely to use impregnated bednets for their children. However, there was no significant relationships of either knowledge concerning the leading cause of malaria, or an appreciation of the value of children, and the use of impregnated bednets.

The findings of the study suggest that efforts to promote malaria prevention by use of impregnated bednets are likely to be successful.