

4238484 ADPM / M : MAJOR : PRIMARY HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT

M.P.H.M. (PRIMARY HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT)

KEY WORDS : PSYCHOTIC PATIENTS/ DELAY TIME

WERADEJ WERAPONGSET : THE DELAY TIME OF TREATMENT IN PSYCHOTIC PATIENTS: A STUDY IN SOMDEJ CHAOPRAYA HOSPITAL.

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A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted to identify the delay time of treatment in psychotic patients of Somdej Chaopraya hospital, Bangkok, Thailand, and to describe the delay time of treatment by socio-demographic characteristics, the symptoms and diagnosis, and socio-cultural and psychological factors. The study was conducted at Out Patient Unit during March 22 to April 20, 2000. The 180 respondents who accompanied patients to hospital were interviewed. The structured questionnaire covering 4 areas: socio-demographic characteristics of relatives, patients and families; symptoms and diagnoses; socio-cultural and psychological factors; and delay time of treatment was used.

The results revealed that total delay time of treatment was 4 months in average. Three components of delay time were identified the average of appraisal delay time was 1 month, illness delay was 21.5 days and utilization delay was 2.5 months. The majority of relatives were female 30-39 years old, low education and low socioeconomic status. Most of them were parents and close relatives. The majority of patients were male, single, less than 30 years old, low education, low socioeconomic status and nearly half of them had no jobs. Patients' families mostly had about 4 persons in each family composed of 2 or 3 generations. The family's average income per month was 10,000 baht. The first symptom of psychotic patients detected by relatives was abnormal symptom of general behavior, and mostly detected by parents and spouses. Most common diagnosis was schizophrenia. Patients received social support from family members more than from outsiders. The majority of the relatives utilized services of modern medicine. They received information about psychosis from mass media and personal sources. TV was the most common source of media while neighbors were the major personal source. Total delay time of treatment was significantly lower among the relatives age group, less than 40 years, and among those who received information support from outside family, especially in utilization delay time, which was significantly lower among the relatives who have more positive attitude toward psychosis. Appraisal and illness delay time of treatment among families that had sufficient income were significantly lower than families that had insufficient income while both delay times were significantly longer among patients who demonstrated more negative symptoms.