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CHARLES C. ZIBA: UTILISATION OF COMMUNITY PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CENTRES IN PODHARAM DISTRICT IN RATCHABURI PROVINCE, THAILAND. THESIS ADVISORS : SOM-ARCH WONGKHOMTHONG, MD, D.H.Sc. KANITTHA CHAMROONSAWASDI, M.Sc.91 p. ISBN 974-663-883-1

A comparative study was conducted on factors affecting utilisation of two Community Primary Health Care Centres (CPHCCs) in Podharam District Ratchaburi Province, Thailand. One centre was located in high utilisation village and the other in a low utilisation village. The objectives of the study were to identify the socio-demographic profiles, perceptions of the villagers on roles and activities of CPHCCs, availability and accessibility to CPHCCs, attitudes of the villagers towards roles and activities of the CPHCCs and health seeking behaviour of the villagers.

One hundred and six villagers from high and low utilisation villages were interviewed. There were 53 respondents from each village. The results of the study showed that there was no difference in age, sex, education, and income of the respondents between the two villages. There was significant difference among respondents in the two villages on occupation of respondents, availability and accessibility to the services at the CPHCCs by the villagers and availability of other funds at the CPHCCs in the two villages. Occupation, income, knowledge about CPHCC activities, means of travel and duration was associated with use of the CPHCC in the high utilisation village. In the high utilisation village again, there was an association with accessibility, availability and distance from the house of respondent with the utilisation of the CPHCC. Respondents had good knowledge about the CPHCC in the high utilisation village and were more likely to use the CPHCC than those with poor knowledge about the CPHCC. Participation in activities and meetings at the CPHCC were associated with utilisation of CPHCC in the high utilisation village.

The recommendations resulting from the findings of this study are as follows: the continuation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials should continue to be distributed widely. This in turn will increase the membership at the CPHCCs. Moreover, the existing incentives to the Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) will also lead to an increase in utilisation of the CPHCCs and therefore benefit the communities.