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TAPAN KUMAR BRAHMA : FACTORS AFFECTING UTILIZATION OF HEALTH CENTER IN PHOTHARAM DISTRICT OF RATCHABURI PROVINCE, THAILAND. THESIS ADVISORS : PRASIT LEERAPAN Ph.D., PREECHA UPAYOKIN Ph.D., KANITTHA CHAMROONSAWASDI M Sc, 84 p. ISBN : 974-663-885-8.

A cross-sectional study was conducted on factors affecting utilization of health center in Photharam district of Ratchaburi province, Thailand. The factors to be studied were socio-demographic i.e., knowledge about health center services, satisfaction towards health center services, availability and accessibility, distance, transportation facility and transportation cost. The villages studied were Ban Neanmog and Ban Chojan. An interview questionnaire was used to collect data from 100 respondents who were purposively selected. For data analysis, descriptive statistical analysis were used to describe the frequency and percentage of variables. The researcher used Chi square and T-test regarding association and comparison. The significant level was set at 0.05.

The results were as follows; 54% of respondents were aged 30-49 years. The majority of the respondents (64%) were female. The education level of most respondents (71%) was primary school. The monthly family income of most (83%) of the respondents was less than 5,000 Baht. Regarding whether or not the monthly income was sufficient, more than half (53%) were found sufficient. Twenty five percent of the respondents had good knowledge. Twelve respondents were highly satisfied with health center's services. Among the respondents (36%) lived less than 2 km from the health center. Sixty seven of the respondents used private vehicle. Sixty eight percent of the respondents spent less than 30 minutes to get to the health center. The majority of the respondents (93%) had no problems of transportation. Seventy three percent of the respondent spent 10-20 Baht for public transportation. Ninety six percent of the respondents found the transportation cost to be moderate. Utilization of health center showed that only 30% of the respondents used health center services. Eighty two percent, of the respondents used health center for common treatment but only 30% of the times. There was no significant association between socio-demographic factors and health center utilization ( $p > 0.05$ ). There was also no significant difference between knowledge and satisfaction among the users and who did not use the health center's services. Although there was no significant difference of knowledge and satisfaction, but it was found that more knowledgeable respondents used the health center. To improve the utilization of health center as well as the quality of its services, it was found that to increase the knowledge and awareness of the potential users could be of great significance. The provision of such knowledge and awareness throughout the user community must be ensured by health education and more initiative by the local community as member of the health center committee.