

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Assessing Quality of Life of the Elderly People in Khon Kaen, Thailand

Improving the quality of life is one method to maintaining independence, preventing and delay disease of the people in later life. WHO (1996) defined quality of life as individual's perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value system in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectation, standards and concerns. QOL also reflects the view that refers to a subjective evaluation that is set in a cultural, social and environment context. It is not expected to provide a means of measuring in any detailed fashion symptom, diseases or condition but rather the effects of diseases and health interventions on QOL. As such, quality of life can not be equated simply with the term "health status", "life style", "life satisfaction", "mental state" or "well being".

At present, the elderly people become the majority of population in the world, we do not deny that there is progressive decline of some organ system with age, accompanied by other personal losses. Many of older persons have severe disabilities and need substantial family to achieve reasonable quality of life. Assessing quality of life of the elderly people helps us to know health needs or health problem of the elderly people in various of dimensions such as physical health, psychological, social relation and environmental health. These data will be useful for the medical practice, improve care-providers and patients relationships, assessing the effectiveness and relative merit of different treatment, in health care service evaluation, in research and in policy making.

This study emphasizes on the elderly people in Khon Kaen, Thailand. The major components are; the essay, the data exercise and the research proposal. The essay part in chapter II, start with the question, what is quality of life in aging and how it could be measured. To answer this question, the essay reviews the related information. There are demographic data, the meaning of older age, the life course perspective, the concept of quality of life, contributing factors to quality of life, assessing the quality of life, advantages of the QOL assessment and limitations on QOL assessment.

Chapter III the data exercise, aimed to do a preliminary study before the actual research. Therefore, the data exercise is designed to improve the researcher's skills into 3 areas; to get acquainted with the QOL instrument, to gain experience in the interview technique and to gain experience in the in-depth interview technique. The data exercise was performed at Thapra Village, Khon Kaen for the quantitative method and at the

Khon Kaen provincial health office for qualitative method. The lessons are presented at the end of this chapter.

Chapter IV deals with a research proposal. Aimed to assess the QOL. The target population are the elderly people who are 60 and over in Khon Kaen. A cross sectional descriptive design was applied. Using the WHOQOL-BREF and sets of Focus Group Discussion.

Chapter V contains a presentation, to the committee during thesis examination. This chapter highlights the essay, the data exercise and the research proposal

The annotated bibliography in chapter VI provides brief overviews of major literature that were consulted during this study.

This study is expected to provide the knowledge and skills in assessing quality of life of the elderly people. Conclusion could be useful for policy making at Khon Kaen province to enhance the elderly's quality of life

REFERENCE

WHO. (1996). WHOQOL-BREF :Introduction, Administration, Scoring and Generic version of the assessment. Geneva: Programme on Mental Health.