HEALTH LITERACY AMONG OLDER ADULTS IN SEMI-URBAN COMMUNITIES, RATCHABURI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Background: The population of the older adults in Ratchaburi Province has increased gradually. The percentage of aged population of Ratchaburi Province were 18.80 in 2017. Health deterioration was a significant issue among those population. Health literacy was a key factor influencing on health. Nevertheless, the study on health literacy among the older people of Ratchaburi Province was rare. Therefore, the study on what level of their health literacy how it was and how it was is needed.
Method: The study was a mixed method study. The objectives were to investigate the level of health literacy among the older adults in Kung Kra Tin and Ban Rai Sub-districts, Muang, Ratchaburi Province. The samples were 230 older adults living in Kung Kra Tin and Ban Rai Sub-districts, Muang, Ratchaburi Province selected by using accidental sampling. The instruments composed of the health literacy questionnaires and interview guides regarding health literacy of the older adults. The quantitative data was collected using the questionnaires in February 2018, follow with qualitative study. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 14 for $\bar{x}$ and S.D. The qualitative data were analyzed by using thematic analysis.
Results: The results showed that 59.99 and 40.01 percent of the samples were men and women. The average of ages was 76.57 years old. Most samples (78.05%) had primary education. Most samples (73.70%) did not have careers / did household works. Most of them (66.11%) had incomes between 1,001 and 5,000 Baht / month. 33.64 percent of them had one chronic disease and the others had more than one chronic disease individually. The average year of being ill was 11.07 years. Most samples had mean score of health literacy in overalls at the moderate level (n=115, 50.00%). Further, they had mean scores of health literacy in overalls at the low and high levels (n=72, 31.30% and n=43, 18.69%). The qualitative results showed themes of how health literacy among the older adults as having knowledge in diseases, seeking information from a variety of sources, joining activities and having communications in societies helped in receiving the information, being interested in the information regarding older adults, having needs of information about doctors and medicines, and transferring knowledge.
Conclusion: Health literacy among the older people living in Ratchaburi Province was in moderate level.

Keywords - Health literacy, older adult, chronic diseases