The Design of Accessible Support System of Health Welfare for the Aging Society in the Local Government of Thailand:
A Case Study of Kumpang Municipality, Satun Province

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Abstract

This study is aimed at examining the access to and the support process for health welfare by aging citizens, and analyzing and proposing a support system for the access of the aging citizens to health welfare in order to encourage a public policy and develop a plan for the local government. This study was participatory action research employing both qualitative research and quantitative research designs.

Based on the analyses of data, it was found that most of the aging citizens were able to do personal chores, transactions and work on their own; however, the ratio between the aging citizens who had congenital diseases and those who did not was almost the same. Most had hypertension. The capacity of the aging citizen to access to a service or health welfare from a municipality was at a low level. Therefore, a support system to help the aging citizens access health welfare was designed. It consisted of some important processes such as the registration process, the checkup process, which involved the checkup process at a preliminary stage and the annual checkup, the
health promotion process, and the health welfare for disease treatment process. The satisfaction with the support system to help the aging citizens access the health welfare was at the highest level.

**Keywords**: Health Welfare, Aging Citizen, Local Government, Thailand

**Introduction**

Since 2004, Thailand has been turning into an aging society. An important condition is the increase of the aging population by more than ten percent. The statistics of senior citizens, with approximately 10.1 percent of such phenomena as a result of declining birth rates, continues to rise. From 2000 to 2030, the Thai aging population is estimated to continuously increase, according to the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (2007). Presently, Thailand has a population of about 10.7 million senior citizens, or 16.4 percent of the total population (Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, 2016). By the year 2030, it is estimated to increase to 17.7 million people, or 25.2 percent of the total population in Thailand.

Currently in Thailand, the care for the aging citizens from their relatives is found to be lacking. However, most of them should stay at the home for the aging. Besides, the senior citizens are also faced with problems in access to social welfare for health. The aging citizens feel worthless and lack the power to negotiate with any public organizations. Therefore, they never expect and intend to negotiate for any social welfare, despite having their rights.

The local government is a form of Thai bureaucracy which serves public service for the senior citizens in relation to the protection, support, and promotion of their welfare according to the Elderly Act B.E. 2546 (2003) and Decentralization Plan and Process Formulation Act, B.E. 2542 (1999). These acts state that the Municipality, The City of Pattaya, and Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) must provide social work services and improve the quality of life for children, women, senior and disadvantaged citizens.