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Conference Abstract

## Exploring Thai community support for disable people

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### Abstract

In Thailand, the number of disabled people has increased dramatically in the last twenty years and their care is solely dependent on family members that should be supported by community as well. Community care is based on an ideology of dependency. On the other hand, community support is rhetoric about helping people to live independent lives.

What is the real need of disabled people? The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore situations, problems and needs of community support as perceived by disabled people in Chantaburi province locating in the eastern region of Thailand. The 76 samples of disabled people were selected by purposive sampling. Data were collected by focus group discussing, in-depth interviewing and brainstorming. Content analysis was performed to analyze and validated by key informants and experts.

The results revealed that disable people perceived as a low class in the society because of living limitation, low level of education, unemployed, very low income and participation restrictions in life situations. The local administrative organization and stakeholders in the community such as community leaders, volunteers and peer groups, played a low-moderate role as a collaborated work in community based rehabilitation program and they were also not clear in the details of policy on the care of people with disabilities.

The findings indicated that disabled people needed to be accepted from community as a general person. Most of them were less likely to develop capabilities and functionality because of lack of support from community, especially support for independent living. Also, the importance of community

support services which are easily accessible to disabled people, arrange community activities and environment that facilitate to them, the provision of information to disabled people about such services, the co-ordination of services through a 'link' of community organizations, people in the community, disabled people and family and set up a learning and rehabilitation center in the community were needed. In addition, solutions to the difficult problems facing disabled people require problem solvers with varying levels of skills, information, and contacts.

In conclusion, Thai disable people have a recognized group in support caring but relatively little attention has been given to their health and wellbeing from community. In order to improve community support, enhancing knowledge, developing skills, ensuring enabling support systems and making use of related networks, collaboration among health professionals, community partners, families, and group members support each other were considered. It goes on to consider the role of community in relation to the country and in the articulation of the political demands to response problem and needs of disabled people.

## **Keywords**

**disability, community support, Thailand, collaboration, needs assessment**

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