

State and Determinant of Caregiver's Mental Health in Thailand: A Household Level Analysis

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Abstract : The majority of care for older people at home in Thai society falls upon caregivers resulting in caregiver's mental health problem. Beyond individual characteristics, household factors might have a profound effect on the caregiver's mental health. But reliable data capturing this at the household level have been limited to date. The objectives of the present study were to explore the levels of Thai caregiver's mental health and to investigate the factors affecting the mental health at household level. Data were obtained from the 2011 National Survey of Thai Older Persons conducted by the National Statistical Office of Thailand. Caregiver's mental health was measured by using the 15- items-short version of the Thai Mental Health Indicator (TMHI-15) developed by the Department of Mental Health, the Ministry of Public Health. Multivariate logistic regression models were used to explore the impact of potential factors on caregiver's mental health. The THMI-15 produced an overall average caregiver mental health score of 30.9 out of 45 (SD 5.3). The score can be categorized into good (34.02-45), fair (27.01-34), and poor (0-27). Duration of care for older people, household wealth, and functional dependency of the older people significantly predicted total caregiver's mental health. Household economic factor was key in predicting better mental health. Compared to those poorest households, the adjusted effect of the fifth quintile household wealth was high (OR=2.34; 95%CI=1.47-3.73). The findings of this study provide a fuller picture to a better understanding of the level and factors that cause the mental health of Thai caregivers. Health care providers and policymakers should consider these factors when designing interventions aimed at alleviating caregiver's psychological burden when provided care for older people at home.

Keywords : caregiver's mental health, household, older people, Thailand

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