

Symptoms Experiences among Thai Adults with Chronic Illnesses: A Study in an Urban Community Area of Bangkok

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Abstract : This research aimed to explore symptom experiences among Thai adults with chronic illnesses living in an urban community area of Bangkok. The sample was 670 adults with ages ranging from 20-59 years. The majority of them (65.2%) had more than one disease. Hypertension, dyslipidemia, and diabetes were the first three diseases among them. About 58% were female, and 51.1 % stayed with their couples. The studied sample had relatively low socioeconomic status; 33.7% were wage workers, 15.2% were street vendors, and 10.4% were unemployed. About 54 % had family incomes less than 10,000 baht (300 US Dollars) per month, and 41.6% addressed that their incomes were not adequate for daily living. Although the majority of them (63.7%) did not have to pay for hospital visits, they still had to pay for public transportation and could not earn a wage or any income on the hospital visit day. The first three physical symptoms they experienced were knee pain (60.5%) due to being overweight, headache (47.0%), and insomnia (44.6%). About 45% stated that their incomes decreased after having chronic illnesses and 37.2% expressed that having lower incomes affected their living, 34.5% perceived being a burden, and 34.3% regret about depending on others. It can be concluded that adults with low socioeconomic status who experienced chronic illnesses and resided in an urban community area had complex needs. While caring for them, nurses should pay attention not only to a disease-related domain but also to a social-related domain. Reached-out clinics led by professional nurses who are well-prepared for primary medical care and home visit are strongly recommended. National Health Security Office should adopt this policy and develop an action plan to serve the needs of chronically ill adults with low socioeconomic status.

Keywords : chronic illnesses, urban community, socioeconomic status, symptom experiences, low incomes

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