

## Empowering Volunteers at Tawanchai Centre for Patients with Cleft Lip and Palate

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**Abstract :** Background: Cleft lip and palate (CLP) congenital anomalies have a high prevalence in the Northeast of Thailand. A care team's understand of treatment plan would help to guide the family of patients with CLP to achieve the treatment. Objectives: To examine the impact of the empowering volunteer project, established in the northeast Thailand. Materials and Methods: The Empowering Volunteer project was conducted in 2008 under the Tawanchai Royal Granted project. The patients and family's general information, treatment, the group brainstorming, and satisfaction with the project were analyzed. Results: Participants were 12 children with CLP, their families and five volunteers with CLP; the participating patients were predominantly females and the mean, age was 12.2 years. The treatment comprised of speech training, dental hygiene care, bone graft and orthodontic treatment. Four issues were addressed including: problems in taking care of breast feeding; instructions' needs for care at birth; difficulty in access information and society impact; and needs in having a network of volunteers. Conclusions: Empowering volunteer is important for holistic care of patients with CLP which provides easy access and multiple channels for patients and their families. It should be developed as part of the self-help and family support group, the development of community based team and comprehensive CLP care program.

**Keywords :** self-help and family support group, community based model, volunteer, cleft lip-cleft palate

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