

Problems in health assessment an experience in hill tribe villages of northern Thailand

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ABSTRACT

In the planning and execution of a health care program, informations concerning the health problems and needs of the target population constitute an essential component in order that the program suits the needs of the people. Assessment of the health status is even more important if the impact of the health care program is to be evaluated. A number of ways and means have been used in the assessment of health status of a community. Various health indicators have been devised. Most, however, use information gathered through the existing health care system and provide a "view from above". Those factors outside the system are therefore neglected. Studies of health status of a community from the point of view of the people or a "view from below" would more accurately reflect the real needs. The lack of technical background and analytical vision in the part of the people can also lead astray. The two approaches can be complimentary and their combination may lead to a better understanding of the health problems and a better assessment.

A study has been made aiming at the assessment of the health problems in hill tribe villages of northern Thailand. Certain aspects of the experience regarding problems and pitfalls in the assessment methods will be discussed here.

Key words: Health assessment, Hill tribe village, Northern Thailand.

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