

# Health system research on diarrhoeal diseases in primary health care

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## ABSTRACT

Diarrhoeal diseases are among the leading health problem in developing countries in particular those underprivileged population in remote rural areas. While in recent years progress has been considerable in the biomedical knowledge regarding the etiology, pathogenesis and therapy of diarrhoeal diseases in children, wide gap exists in the utilization of these knowledge to the benefit of the population in need in the villages. Improvement in the environment and changes in the life style can be accomplished in small receptive groups of people when the situation is favorable. This approach and other intervention attempt against diarrhoeal disease however usually meet with serious socioeconomic constraints and an appropriate goal and strategy is required. In this context diarrhoeal diseases need to be seen in the holistic setting. Even when health is of immediate concern, care for diarrhoeal diseases must be an integral part of a comprehensive health care.

The present communication will deal with the operational research or health services research or more appropriately health system research with an aim to examine various activities by which the people can better cope with the problems of diarrhoeal diseases. The appropriate activities will undoubtedly vary according to the local settings in various countries. The role of research and its priority areas would also be different. A study in hill tribe villages in northern Thailand will be used as a case study to illustrate the interacting factors and activities. A paper entitled "Health services research towards HFA 2000, a case study at hill tribe villages in northern Thailand" is also published in this issue and would serve to illustrate the research project in totality covering a comprehensive primary health care approach. The specific aspects regarding diarrhoeal diseases will be addressed in the present paper.

**Key words:** Health system research, Diarrhoeal diseases, Primary health care.