

Promoting the health of the elderly in the Nakhan Nakhon Si Thammarat community

Assistant Professor Kumlai Somrak

Sumoltip Sontimuang

Assistant Professor Docter Sujira Wichaidit

With advancements in medical care, public health, sanitation, economics, social systems, and environmental management, the mortality rate has decreased, leading to an increase in the elderly population. As people age, natural bodily changes and a decline in the efficiency of internal organs make older adults more susceptible to health issues, both physical and mental. These health challenges often stem from long-term behavioral health problems, leading to chronic illnesses that cannot be cured completely but require ongoing care. Recognizing the health challenges faced by the elderly, the community of Ban Nakun in Na Riang Subdistrict, Phrom Khiri District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, has identified a significant number of affected households—80 households, or 61.54% of the community. To address these issues, the community aims to enhance the health and well-being of its elderly residents, particularly by promoting appropriate exercise routines that cater to the elderly. This initiative focuses on improving physical, mental, and social health, strengthening community elderly groups, and providing support mechanisms for both local elderly individuals and disadvantaged or migrant populations.

Project Implementation Formation and Planning: A working group was established and convened to oversee the project. This group is tasked with understanding the project's objectives, setting community guidelines, and building community capacity. An assessment was conducted to gather data on the health status of the elderly in the community. This involved analyzing the existing health problems and evaluating the performance of the elderly groups/clubs in Ban Nakun. **Analysis and Collaboration:** The collected data was summarized and analyzed to understand the current situation of elderly health and to develop strategies for sustainable improvement. Information was presented to relevant stakeholders to seek collaboration in enhancing the functioning of elderly clubs and addressing health problems linked to inappropriate exercise.

Network and support partnerships were formed with various organizations, including the Faculty of Nursing, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth), the Na Riang Subdistrict Administrative Organization, local health volunteers (OSM), the Community Development Office, and the District Agricultural Office of Phrom Khiri. These partnerships aimed to support the development of elderly clubs and ensure that health care and exercise plans were sustainable. Annual Planning and Activities New plans for elderly groups were developed, including annual action plans tailored to the community's elderly situation. Key activities focused on health promotion, such as introducing correct and appropriate exercises for the elderly. These activities included traditional games and exercises using local resources like cloth. Learning and Sharing: Platforms for learning and exchanging experiences were created to facilitate cooperation among village committees, community leaders, and relevant agencies. Lessons learned from the project were documented and used to build ongoing support and collaboration.

Outcomes and Success Indicators effective Management: The working group demonstrated effective project management skills. They provided the elderly and their caregivers with knowledge about appropriate exercise routines, including traditional activities and exercises using cloth. Improved Knowledge and Practices: Elderly individuals, including local residents, migrants from Myanmar and Laos, as well as those who are disabled or bedridden, gained an understanding of suitable exercises. The project ensured that the environment supported self-care and exercise. Success Indicators, Effective Leadership: Elderly leaders performed their roles effectively in managing the elderly groups/clubs. Regular Exercise: At least 80% of the target elderly group engaged in regular exercise five days a week, for 30 minutes per session. Appropriate Equipment Use: At least 80% of the elderly group used appropriate exercise equipment. Increased Happiness: At least 50% of the target elderly group reported an increase in happiness. Community Engagement: 80% of elderly individuals participated in communal activities, such as group prayer sessions on holy days.

Collaborative Efforts: The project successfully established a collaborative framework involving various stakeholders. The partnership included the Faculty of Nursing, Thai Health, the Na Riang Subdistrict Administrative Organization, local health volunteers (OSM), the Community Development Office, and the District Agricultural Office of Phrom Khiri. This collaborative approach was essential for driving the project forward and ensuring its sustainability. The project's efforts in promoting appropriate exercise and community engagement have contributed to a better quality of life for the elderly in Ban Nakun, providing

a model for other communities to follow. The results of the project will be expanded to the subdistrict and district levels.