

EVALUATION OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH EHEALTH LITERACY AMONG OLDER ADULT SOCIAL MEDIA USERS IN THAILAND

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Abstract. The term “eHealth literacy” refers to the ability to access, understand, and use information about health obtained through internet. In this study, we aimed to determine the level of eHealth literacy and the factors associated with them among older Thai adults who are social media users in order to inform programs to develop eHealth literacy in the study population. The minimum sample size of 995 calculated by G power was required. Study subjects were selected using a multi-stage stratified sampling technique. A total of 1,237 subjects were recruited from 10 provinces representing 5 regions of Thailand. Inclusion criteria for study subjects were being ≥ 60 years old and using social media or the internet while exclusion criterion was applied to the older adults who have cognitive impairment. Data collection was conducted during July to December 2016 using self-reported questionnaires. Of 1,237 study subjects, 59.8% were female with mean age 66.9 (+5.5) (range: 60-94) years, 30.2% of study subjects had very low income (THB $\leq 2,500$ per month), 80.5% perceived good health, 41.8% used the internet and social media < 1 hour per day and 26.9% used the internet and social media 1-2 hours per day). eHealth literacy mean score was 18.94 (+9.79) which was lower than the cut off score of 26. Multiple regression analyses revealed that the study variables (age, education, health status, and internet or social media usage) account for 41.0% ($R^2 = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$) of eHealth literacy of Thai older adults. eHealth literacy of Thai older adults associated positively with level of education ($p < 0.001$), health status ($p < 0.01$), and internet or social media use ($p < 0.001$); and negatively with age ($p < 0.001$).

Keywords: eHealth, health literacy, social media, elderly

INTRODUCTION

The number of adults in Thailand aged ≥ 60 years increased from 10.7% in 2007 to 17.1% million in 2017 and to 20% in 2021 (NSO, 2018), making the country become the aged society (TGRI, 2016). This group is facing with physical deterioration resulting to health problems and chronic

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