ABSTRACT

A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted on psycho-social factors associated with the performance of Village Health Volunteers in nutrition promotion activities for children under five years of age in Haiduong Province, Vietnam. A quantitative approach using a questionnaire was undertaken among 190 VHVs in Haiduong Province, who had been working at the time of data collection. The study aimed to determine the VHVs’ performance in nutrition promotion activities for children under five years of age and to examine the relationship between psycho-social factors and the VHVs’ performance. The questionnaire was pre-tested with 24 VHVs, who were from 24 communes, which were not selected for the study. The study was undertaken in three communes in Haiduong Province in March 2001. The data was analyzed using SPSS: descriptive statistics and Pearson’s Chi-square.

The study results revealed that among the 190 VHVs (91 male, 99 female), their age ranged between 21 to 72 years old. The working duration of the VHVs ranged from 1 to 23 years, with 1 to 5 years comprising 43.7 %, over 5 to 10 years comprising 20% and over 10 years comprising 36.3%. One hundred percent of the VHVs attended training courses about nutrition promotion activities at least one time. The levels of knowledge, attitude and performance of the VHVs were quite high. The knowledge of the VHVs was divided into three levels: good (42.1 %), fair (37.9%) and poor (20.0%). The levels of attitude were comprised of high (39.5%), moderate (38.4%) and low (22.1%). The results of their performance were shown to be good (31.1%), fair (56.8%) and poor (12.1%). There were statistically significant associations between knowledge and performance ($\chi^2 = 92.828$, $P = 0.000$), attitude and performance ($\chi^2 = 54.100$, $P = 0.000$) and attitude and knowledge ($\chi^2 = 51.656$, $P = 0.000$). The study also found that there were relationships between some demographic characteristics of the VHVs (such as gender, age, occupation and number of children) and their performance. Moreover, the study also found a statistically significant association between the performance of the VHVs and the level of training they had received. However, the study did not find the any association between the education level and marital status of the VHVs and their performance.

Further basic research utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods needs to be conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the psycho-social factors affecting the performance of VHVs in nutrition promotion activities for children under five years of age. In addition other support factors such as economic,
policy and cultural factors, which were not included in this study should be considered in further research about this subject.