ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional study is being conducted to assess the mental health status and correlated factors among the married women in rural villages at Non Soong district in Nakhon Ratchasima province during January 2002.

A total of 420 married females, aged between 20 to 50 years, were interviewed to obtain information about their mental health status, socio-demographic characteristics, biological characteristics, interpersonal influences, situational factors, and behavioral factors. The Mental Health Indicator for Thai people (by Otrakul et al., 1997) was used to determine mental health status of the respondents.

The study revealed that among the study population, 64.3 percent of the women were in good mental health, 23.6 percent were in fair mental health, and 12.1 percent were in poor mental health (psychological distress). The major findings of this study were as follows: 1) Family income had a significant relationship with the respondents’ mental health status. The highest proportion of poor mental health was seen in the highest income group. 2) Regarding health status, those who had a disease, either chronic or acute, were likely to have poorer mental health. 3) A husband’s contribution to childbearing and housework contributed to better mental health for his wife. Wives who have experienced domestic violence and/or verbal abuse from their husband were likely to have poorer mental health. Other factors that were likely to reduce a woman’s mental health were frequent quarreling with her husband and the husband’s adultery, and a poor relationship with her and/or his family. In addition, a husband’s alcohol behavior and quarreling were likely to lead to abusive behavior on his part. 4) Amount of work was significantly related to the respondents’ mental health status. However, the relationship was neither concordant nor discordant. 5) Respondents whose husbands were away from home were more likely to have poorer mental health. 6) The situation of indebtedness, either occasionally or regularly, was more likely to correlate with poorer mental health than not being in debt. 7) Those who drank alcohol and who drank alcohol under stressful situations were more likely to have poorer mental health.

The findings point to the importance of mental health problems among married females in a community, and its factors should be considered when planning
and implementing programs intended to enhance the mental well-being of married women in rural villages.