

UC Irvine

UC Irvine Previously Published Works

Title

A MIXED METHOD STUDY OF HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOR FOR FEBRILE ILLNESSES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MALARIA CONTROL AND ELIMINATION IN SAVANNAKHET PROVINCE, LAO PDR

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/748848n5>

Journal

AMERICAN JOURNAL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE, 99(4)

ISSN

0002-9637

Authors

Adhikari, Bipin
Phommasone, Koukeo
Pongvosa, Tiengkham
et al.

Publication Date

2018

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

400

A MIXED METHOD STUDY OF HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOR FOR FEBRILE ILLNESSES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MALARIA CONTROL AND ELIMINATION IN SAVANNAKHET PROVINCE, LAO PDR

Bipin Adhikari¹, Koukeo Phommasone², Tiengkham Pongvosa³, Palingnaphone Koummarasy², Xayaphone Soundala², Gisela Henriques¹, Pasathorn Sirithiranont¹, Daniel M Parker⁴, Lorenz von Seidlein¹, Nicholas J White¹, Nicholas PJ Day¹, Arjen M Dondorp¹, Paul N Newton², Phaik Yeong Cheah¹, Christopher Pell⁵, Mayfong Mayxay²

¹Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit, Bangkok, Thailand, ²Lao-Oxford-Mahosot Hospital-Wellcome Trust Research Unit (LOMWRU), Microbiology Laboratory, Mahosot Hospital, Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic, ³Savannakhet Provincial Health Department, Savannakhet Province, Laos, Savannakhet, Lao People's Democratic Republic, ⁴Department of Population Health and Disease Prevention, University of California, California, CA, United States, ⁵Centre for Social Science and Global Health, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Health seeking behavior is shaped by interactions between individual and societal factors as well as health services. Analyses of the determinants of health seeking behavior are important for malaria control and elimination.

The main objective of this study was to explore factors affecting the health seeking behavior for febrile illnesses in Lao PDR. Household heads or their representatives (n=281) were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. 8 to 10 people from each study village (n=100) were included for focus group discussions (FGDs). Most respondents were *Lao Theung* (269/281; 95.7% that comprised ethnic groups: *Mang Kong*: 200/281; 71.7% and *Tree*: 64/281; 22.7%), males (201/281; 71.5%) and almost half were from the age group 31-50 years (138/281; 49.1%). Geographic proximity to a health centre (AOR=6.5; CI=1.74-24.25; for those < 3.5km versus those > 3.6km) and previous experience of attending a health centre (AOR=4.7; CI=1.2-19.1) were both strong predictors of visiting a health centre when febrile symptoms were experienced as opposed to traditional healers. Attending local health centers/hospitals was often constrained by the transportation and finances. The first choice for treatment for most participants was local health centres, even though there was a mix of seeking health care from traditional healers as well. Participants indicated that they navigate more than one type of health care system (health centre/hospitals and traditional healers). Decisions about where and when to attend formal health care facilities depended on finances, travel capabilities (distance to the health centre, road conditions, availability of transport), severity of symptoms and recognition of the illness (more likely to attend health centres/hospitals if considered severe). Reducing health care costs and increasing the ease of access to health care facilities may lead to improved health care attendance. Current and future malaria control programs can only benefit by addressing these factors in addition to collaboration with the existing network of health workers, village health volunteers and traditional healers.

Source: The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Volume 99, Issue 4_Suppl, 1 Oct 2018, p. 125.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4269/ajtmh.abstract2018>