

BARRIERS AND FACILITATING FACTORS AMONG LAY HEALTH WORKERS AND PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH IN CHON BURI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract. This study explored the barriers and facilitating factors among lay health workers (LHWs) and primary care providers (PCPs) in implementing a multi-level program to promote children's oral health care in a rural Thai community. Twelve focus groups and 11 in-depth interviews were conducted with LHWs and PCPs who implemented the program from January 2008 to January 2009. The findings showed that the PCPs encountered the constraints of time and human resources, lack of ownership, and problem of coordination with the district hospital. The barriers among LHWs during home visits were related to their assumption of caregiver's knowledge, some conflicting beliefs, and limited counseling skills. The facilitating factors were the training program, caregivers' positive feedback, and available resources such as brochures and toothbrushes. The PCPs identified LHWs as the main facilitators of the program and indicated that policy should be developed for better integrating oral health services in local health centers. This study provides a better understanding of the barriers and facilitating factors to promote children's oral health in rural Thai communities. While the barriers to integrating oral health activities to primary care are complex, the use of LHWs to promote the children's oral health was feasible and should be supported.

Keywords: oral health care, health education, health promotion, oral health, primary health care

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