

DETERMINANTS OF eHEALTH LITERACY LEVEL AMONG ROYAL THAI ARMY PERSONNEL: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: The use of internet based information and communication technology to obtain health information (eHealth) has gained increasing attention in public health. People need to know how to access accurate, appropriate health information (eHealth literacy). The objective of this study was to determine the eHealth literacy level among Royal Thai Army (RTA) personnel and identify factors associated with the level of eHealth literacy. Baseline data from this study will be used for both developing and evaluating a program to promote eHealth literacy among RTA personnel. In 2016, RTA personnel in Bangkok who admitted to accessing the internet were asked to fill out a questionnaire to test their eHealth literacy. The results were quantified into an eHealth literacy scale. Three hundred subjects were included in this study. The mean age of study subjects was 34 (range: 19-59) years. Of the study subjects, 73.7% had previously accessed health information on the internet. The average score was 31.6 (range: 20-40) points, with a score of ≥ 26 points being determined to have adequate eHealth literacy. On multivariate analysis using logistic regression, eHealth literacy level was significantly influenced by perceived usefulness of the internet in making decisions about health ($p = 0.017$) and perceived importance of being able to access eHealth resources ($p = 0.006$). Our study suggested the best method to improve eHealth literacy among RTA personnel is to educate the population on the perceived usefulness of the internet and the importance of being able to access eHealth resources. Further studies are needed to determine the quality of eHealth information accessed and determine which RTA personnel would benefit the most from a program to improve eHealth literacy.

Keywords: eHealth literacy, Royal Thai Army personnel

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