

# FLOOD PREPAREDNESS BEHAVIOR AMONG OLDER PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC DISEASES IN A FLOOD PRONE AREA OF THAILAND

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**Abstract.** Older people with chronic diseases are vulnerable during floods. We aimed to determine flood preparedness behavior among older people with chronic diseases in a flood prone area of Thailand in order to inform efforts to improve preparedness in the study population. Baan Pan Subdistrict, a flood prone area in Pra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand was randomly selected for this study. A total of 274 older adults with chronic diseases registered at Baan Pan Health Promotion Sub-district Hospital (Primary healthcare unit) were asked to participate in the study. Each subject was interviewed following a structured questionnaire asking about their demographics, history of chronic diseases, flood threat perception, flood coping perception and flood preparedness behavior. Each subject's functional level was assessed using a modified version of the Barthel Activities of Daily Living Index. This cross-sectional study was conducted during January - March, 2015. A total of 204 subjects completed the interview. The mean [ $\pm$ standard deviation (SD)] age of study subjects was 72.2 ( $\pm$ 7.3) years; 66.7% were females. Most subjects (96.1%) had hypertension, 25.5% had diabetes mellitus and 17.6% had ischemic heart disease. Sixty-eight point six percent had lived in a house damaged by flooding and 10.3% had previously been evacuated from their home due to flood damage. Seventeen point six percent of subjects had been previously hospitalized due to acute illness or injury related to flooding. Our study findings show flood preparedness behavior among the study subjects was associated with their perception regarding flood threat, flood coping ability and physical ability to take care of themselves during a flood. On multiple regression analyses, flood threat perception and flood coping perception jointly explained 36.8% of variance regarding flood preparedness behavior among study subjects. The study population needs to be educated regarding flood threat and preparedness in order to improve flood preparedness behavior.

**Keywords:** flood preparedness, older people, chronic diseases, Thailand

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