

DISABILITIES AND IMPAIRMENT OF THE THAI POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

This study of disabilities and impairment of the Thai population aims to study demographic, economic, and social status of the people with health problems, the people with disabilities, and the people with impairment. This study focuses on the relationship of various factors and the order of their importance in terms of their effects on the healthiness of the people (including the effects of health on work activities). The data used are obtained from the National Statistical Office of Thailand.

The study finds that the people with health problems, the people with disabilities, and the people with impairment have economic and social disadvantage. Most of them have primary education or less and are unemployed. Most of those who are employed have monthly salary less than 2,500 baht. The most common health problems are cardiovascular diseases, diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue, and diseases of endocrine system, metabolic diseases and nutrition status. Common problems with regards to daily activities are flushing after excretion, bathing, dressing, mouth care, and eating. Common disabilities and impairment are eye-vision problems, hearing-impairment, and paraplegia.

The paper uses the Chi-square Test to analyze the effects of demographic, economics, and social factors on disabilities and impairment problems and the Cramer methodology to rank the effects. Findings from the paper suggest that every factor studied has significant effects on disabilities and impairment with the statistical significance level at 0.05. However, the magnitudes of the effects are different for different factors.

The results from the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Multiple Classification show that demographic, economics, and social factors have significant effects on the severity of health problems. Health problems among men are more likely to be more severe than that among women. The severity is more likely to increase with age and decrease with the level of education. The persons whose occupations are in agriculture and fishery tend to have more severe problems related to activities that require handling and craftsmanship. For each factor, similar results emerge when controlling for all other factors.