DUANGKAEW KLEEBTHONG
Mid Sweden University, Sweden

OLDER THAI PEOPLES' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF MAJOR DEPRESSION

Abstract:

Abstract

Background: Depressive disorders are common mental health problems and may be disabling among the general older population. Although older people have significant symptoms of depression, the symptoms are likely to be underreported. The condition often co-exist along with somatic ill and has often been unrecognized. The aim of the study was to explore and understand the perceptions and experiences of older Thai people diagnosed with major depressive disorder.

Methods: A qualitative inductive research design was used and latent content analysis was utilized. The data were collected through face-to-face, in-depth interviews. Fourteen older people diagnosed with major depressive disorder were selected for participant using purposive sampling.

Findings: Older Thai peoples' perceptions and experiences of depression were abstracted into two themes. First theme was leading a life in detachment, which included three subthemes: living with meaninglessness, holding distress with one's self, and feeling judged by surrounded people. The second theme was inconvenience of approaching mental health treatment, which included two subthemes: sensing an unapproachable health care services, and lacking knowledge about clinical depression.

Conclusion: Older Thai peoples' perceptions and experiences of major depression were affected with high level suspected existential loneliness that might even be worse in a collect oriented society as in the Thai context. Further, it seem hard to approach the mental health care. The central reason for this is interpreted as lack of mental health literacy, and in this case knowledge on depression. Future studies should focus on relatives' experiences of living with an older family member that suffered from major depression, and on the state of mental health literacy in the rural Thai population.

Keywords:

Keyword: major depression, qualitative latent content analysis, rural, Thai