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**BARRIERS TO RESEARCH, RESEARCH COMPETENCY AND  
RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN A DISTRICT LOCATED NEAR  
WALILAK UNIVERSITY, THAILAND**

**Abstract:**

Scientific research plays an important role in efforts to encourage evidence-based practices in healthcare systems. However, research has not been given a priority by healthcare professionals. A strategy commonly used to reduce the gap between research and practice is to identify barriers and then tailor interventions to overcome the identified barriers in the given context.

This cross-sectional study was the first phase of a project to promote research-based public health practices. The aims were to examine: 1) educational level, education about research subject, training in research, perceived barriers to research implementation, perceived research competency and research implementation and 2) factors related to research implementation of public health professionals working in the district where Walailak University is located, i.e., Thasala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

Stratified random sampling was used to sample 149 subjects, including registered nurses, public health technical officers, public health officers, medical technologists, medical science technicians, physiotherapists and others. The 5-point scale of perceived barriers to research and perceived research competency, having a Cronbach's alpha of .94 and .93, respectively, were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and binary logistic regression.

The findings showed that 87.2% of participants graduated at bachelor degree level, 89.3% had ever studied about research, 45% had experienced research training and 10.7% had experienced research implementation as a head of a research project. Participants had low perceived research competency ( $M=2.9$ ) and high barriers to research ( $M=3.2$ ). Research training was the only factor significantly associated with research implementation ( $p$ -value  $<.05$ ). The top ten barriers ( $M=3.32-3.89$ ) reported included: 1) problems about reading research reports in English, 2) overwhelming work responsibilities, 3) lack of research team, 4) lack of skills to conduct research, 5) lack of time, 6) lack of research mentors, 7) abundance of research procedures, 8) lack of research funding, 9) lack of knowledge about research methods and 10) inaccessibility to sources of information.

Priorities given to decrease identified barriers should include building research competency and providing research assistants, funding and mentors as well as encouraging research implementation in routine practices.

**Keywords:**

barriers to research, research competency, research implementation

**JEL Classification:** I00, I00, I00