

Healthcare services for Japanese elderly long-staying in Thailand from the perspective of the patient and healthcare providers: A survey study.

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Source

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Abstract

Long-stay refers to a long visit abroad by retired middle-aged and older people. This study describes the attitudes/opinions of elderly Japanese long-staying subjects and healthcare providers in Thailand. Two cross-sectional questionnaire surveys were conducted in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. Questionnaires were sent to a sample recruited from a self-help group of Japanese elders in Thailand (n=68) and to Thai healthcare providers (n=101). About half of the Japanese subjects routinely used a Thai medical service, although only 15% had been admitted to the hospital. Half of the Japanese subjects thought the quality of Thai medical services was high. Many elderly Japanese subjects were unable to speak either English or Thai, leading to communication difficulties. About 80% of healthcare professionals found no difference between caring for elderly Japanese subjects and people from Thailand. Most healthcare providers agreed that Japanese language training should be available to medical staff as translators were not always available. Healthcare providers agreed with the Thai government policy promoting long-stays. The most recognized obstacle in caring for Japanese long-stay elderly was the language barrier. More research on Japanese elders staying abroad is needed to promote effective communication between Japanese elderly and other ethnic healthcare professionals.

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