

นิพนธ์ต้นฉบับ

การทบทวนวรรณกรรมแบบกำหนดขอบเขตงานวิจัยเกี่ยวกับสุขภาพจิตที่จัดทำโดยแพทย์เวชศาสตร์ครอบครัวไทยในช่วงสองทศวรรษ (2543-2566)

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บทคัดย่อ

ที่มา: ปัญหาสุขภาพจิตส่งผลกระทบต่อบุคคล ครอบครัว ชุมชน รวมถึงค่าใช้จ่ายด้านสุขภาพ การบูรณาการสุขภาพจิตเข้ากับระบบบริการปฐมภูมิจะช่วยส่งเสริมการดูแลผู้ป่วยแบบองค์รวม ซึ่งอาจนำไปสู่ผลลัพธ์ที่ดีขึ้น งานวิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลงานวิจัยด้านสุขภาพจิตที่จัดทำโดยแพทย์เวชศาสตร์ครอบครัวไทย

แบบวิจัย: การทบทวนวรรณกรรมแบบกำหนดขอบเขต

วัตถุประสงค์และวิธีการ: วิเคราะห์งานวิจัยด้านสุขภาพจิตของแพทย์เวชศาสตร์ครอบครัวไทยที่ตีพิมพ์ปี พ.ศ. 2543-2566 จากฐานข้อมูล Famscholar (ที่จัดทำขึ้นในปี พ.ศ. 2566 ซึ่งรวบรวมงานวิจัยจาก Scopus และ ThaiJo)

ผลการศึกษา: จากทั้งหมด 108 บทความ มี 57 บทความที่เข้าเกณฑ์สำหรับการศึกษา มาจากฐานข้อมูล Scopus (ร้อยละ 53) และ ThaiJo (ร้อยละ 47) โดยร้อยละ 79 เป็นงานวิจัยแบบภาคตัดขวาง ส่วนใหญ่เป็นการศึกษาเกี่ยวกับภาวะโรค (ร้อยละ 89) มากกว่าแนวทางการรักษา (ร้อยละ 11) ภาวะซึมเศร้าเป็นหัวข้อที่พบมากที่สุด (ร้อยละ 37) และร้อยละ 46 ของงานวิจัยศึกษาในบริบทโรงพยาบาล

สรุป: บทความส่วนใหญ่ใช้รูปแบบการวิจัยแบบภาคตัดขวาง โดยภาวะซึมเศร้าเป็นหัวข้อที่ให้ความสนใจมากที่สุด ส่วนใหญ่เน้นไปที่การศึกษาสถานการณ์สุขภาพจิตและปัจจัยที่เกี่ยวข้องมากกว่าแนวทางการรักษา แหล่งข้อมูลมาจากทั้งในโรงพยาบาลและชุมชนในอนาคตแนะนำให้ทำการศึกษาแนวทางการรักษาในชุมชนให้มากขึ้น

คำสำคัญ: สุขภาพจิต ภาวะซึมเศร้า แพทย์เวชศาสตร์ครอบครัว ประเทศไทย

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A Scoping Review of Mental Health Research Conducted by Family Physicians During Two Decades of the Thai Family Physician (2000-2023)

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ABSTRACT

Background: Mental health issues significantly impact individuals, families, communities, and healthcare costs. Integrating mental health into primary care fosters a holistic approach to patient care, leading to potential advantages. This study aimed to analyze the research evidence on mental health published by Thai family physicians.

Design: A Scoping Review

Methods: Analysis of Thai family physicians' research on mental health issues, based on publications from 2000-2023 aggregated on Famscholar (a platform launched in November 2023 that collects publications from Scopus and Thaijo).

Results: Out of 108 articles found, only 57 were relevant to the study. These relevant articles were retrieved from Scopus (53%) and Thaijo (47%). The majority of the articles (79%) were cross-sectional studies. The studies mainly showed the disease burden (89%) rather than exploring interventions (11%). Depression was the most common topic (37%), and almost half (46%) of the studies were conducted in hospitals

Conclusion: Most studies employed a cross-sectional design with a primary focus on depression. These studies primarily examined local mental health conditions and their associated factors rather than interventions. Data for these studies was collected from both hospital and community settings. Conducting more community-based research to identify novel interventions is recommended

Keywords: mental health, depression, family physicians, Thailand

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that mental health is mental well-being where individuals can cope with the normal stresses of life, realize their full potential, work productively, and make contributions to the community.¹ Mental health encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being which can affect relationships, physical health, and daily living.²⁻⁴ Therefore, good mental health at all stages of life, from childhood through adulthood and aging is crucial.⁵

Mental disorders can also be classified as mental health conditions. Mental health conditions encompass a wider range of experiences, including mental disorders, psychosocial disabilities, and other mental states that cause considerable distress, functional impairment, or increase the risk of self-harm. WHO has reported that there are approximately 970 million people worldwide having mental problems in 2019 and the number is increasing. Among these populations, depression and anxiety are the most common mental illness.⁶

Mental health problems create a substantial burden affecting individuals, families, communities, and the health care system. There is a gap between the prevalence of mental disorders and the number of people receiving therapy globally. When these populations can access mental health services easier and closer to their homes it could help close this existing gap.⁷ Thus, integrating mental health into primary care which facilitates a whole-person approach to care can bring important benefits.

The World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) coordinates with WHO and also plays a role in mental health care aimed to encourage mental well-being by promoting primary care management of mental health through evidence-based health care. WONCA supports WHO in promoting a shift of patient with mental illness in the hospital to be more dignified in their communities. Thereby, mental health services delivered in primary care improve the quality of life for many patients and their families by minimizing the burden of mental illness.^{7,8} WONCA's vision for mental health aims to enhance understanding of the global

burden of depression and mental health disorders, filling critical knowledge gaps necessary for developing effective interventions to promote mental well-being.⁸

In Thailand, the Thai National Mental Health Survey 2013 found that the lifetime prevalence of mental health and substance use disorders was 30.8%. However, only 11.5% received services in the past year, and just 3.7% received care from a healthcare professional.⁹ According to these facts The Royal College of Family Physicians of Thailand (RCFPT) included mental health issues in the "A Scoping Review of Mental Health Research Conducted by Family Physicians During Two Decades of the Thai Family Physician" in 2024. This article aimed to explore the research on mental health issues conducted by Thai Family Physicians between 2000-2023 to identify new knowledge, practices, or innovations for the primary healthcare management of mental health and also analyze the gaps in research direction to improve the mental health in primary care in the future.

Methods

Study design

The authors conducted a scoping review to identify relevant mental health studies.

Data sources and search strategy

The data for this study were extracted from Famscholar¹⁰ using Python, a programming language, to collect articles based on the mental health search terms outlined in Table 1. The Famscholar database is an online platform launched in November 2023 for academic research. It was created by Chiang Mai University's Department of Family Medicine and contains research data from members enrolled in the Thai Board of Family Medicine's Diploma program.

Study selection

S.P. and J.R., working separately, initially evaluated the studies by examining their titles and summaries. When unsure about including a study, they retrieved the full article for further assessment. Any disagreements between them

Table 1. Search terms for mental health

Categories	Keywords
Mental health	Depress, anxiety, cognitive disorder, substance-related disorder, adjustment, mental health, stress, burnout, happinometer, addiction, MDD

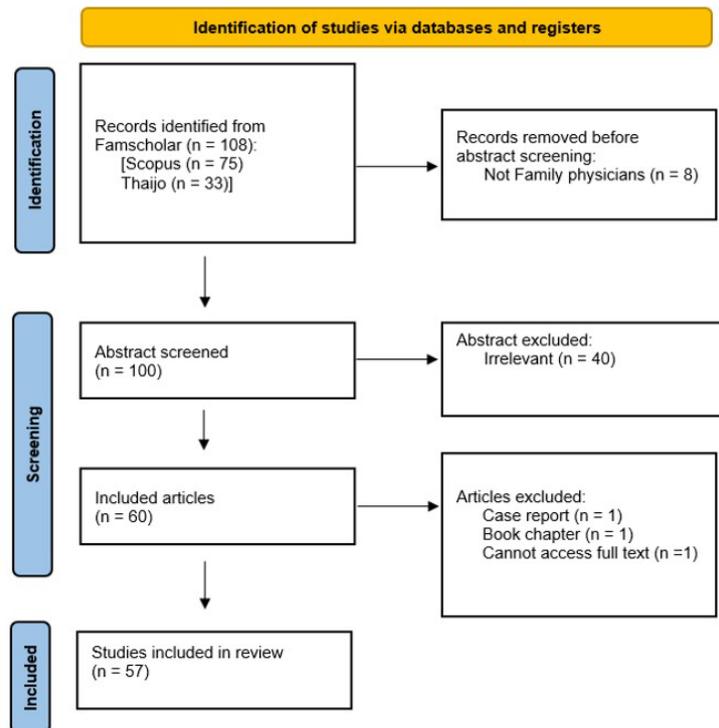


Figure 1. Flow diagram of the study selection

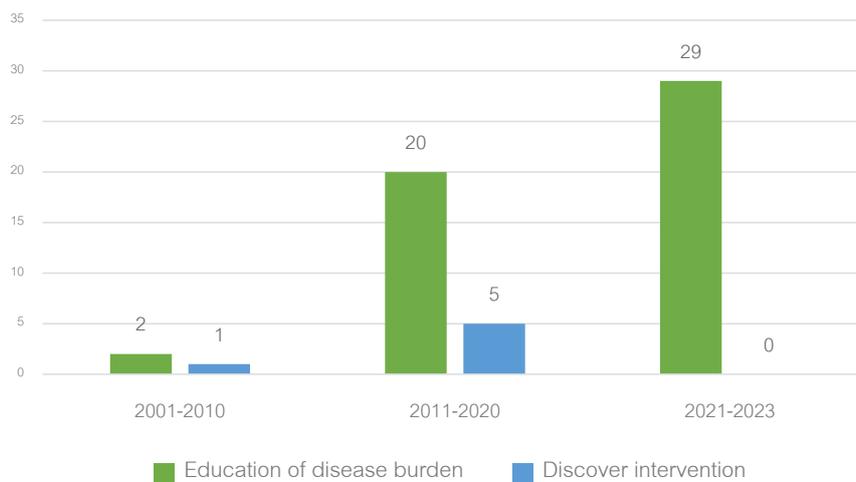


Figure 2. Number of articles by purpose of study (per decade)

were resolved through discussions and by consulting with a third researcher, R.T.

Inclusion criteria:

The study considered original articles, integrative reviews, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses. These studies were included in both Thai and English languages.

Exclusion criteria:

Full-text article is unavailable or none of the authors are family physicians.

Results

Researchers found 108 articles (75 from Scopus, 33 from Thaijo). The author used the Medical

Council of Thailand database to screen for Thai family physicians. Eight articles were excluded because they did not include family physicians. After the abstract screening, 60 were selected for retrieval. Following further review based on specific criteria, 57 studies remained for analysis (Figure 1).

The study found that the number of articles published increased over time, with 3, 25, and 29 articles published between 2001-2010, 2011-2020, and 2021-2023, respectively. Six articles regarding intervention were published between 2001-2010 and 2011-2020 (Figure 2).

Thirty studies were found in the Scopus database, and twenty-seven were found in the ThaiJo database. The most common methodology (79%, or 45 studies) was cross-sectional studies. Other research designs were used less frequently, with only four studies each being randomized controlled trials (RCTs) or systematic reviews/meta-analyses. Two cohort studies, and one study each using a non-RCT or mixed-method approach were found (Table 2).

Most research focused on depression (37%), followed by combined depression and anxiety (with or without other conditions such as stress and grief) (16%) and stress (16%). Substance use and burden/burnout were less common, occurring in 9% of studies each (Figure 3). When categorized by purpose and content of the studies, 89% of studies aimed to assess the situations and risk factors of these conditions (disease

burden), while 11% explored potential solutions (intervention discovery) (Figure 4). 46% of studies came from hospitals, and 40% from community settings, with the rest from secondary data or surveys (Figure 5).

Discussion

The most popular research method, the cross-sectional study (79%), is used to study associations, for instance, between exposure and disease, and to make comparisons in disease and symptom rates between exposed and unexposed groups. This might be due to the simple and easiest way of the studies for the new family physicians at the beginning stage of their work. Cross-sectional studies have limitations in establishing causal relationships and only provide a snapshot of data at a single point, serial cross-sectional studies might be needed to show the trends.¹¹ Then longi-

Table 2. Article methods

Method	Scopus N = 30 (53%)	ThaiJo N = 27 (47%)	Total N = 57 (100%)
Observational			
Qualitative study	-	-	-
Cross-sectional study	19	26	45 (79.0)
Case-control study	-	-	-
Cohort study	2	0	2 (3.5)
Experimental			
Clinical trial (RCT)	4	0	4 (7.0)
Clinical trial (non-RCT)	1	0	1 (1.8)
Mixed method study	1	0	1 (1.8)
Systematic review/ Meta-analysis	3	1	4 (7.0)

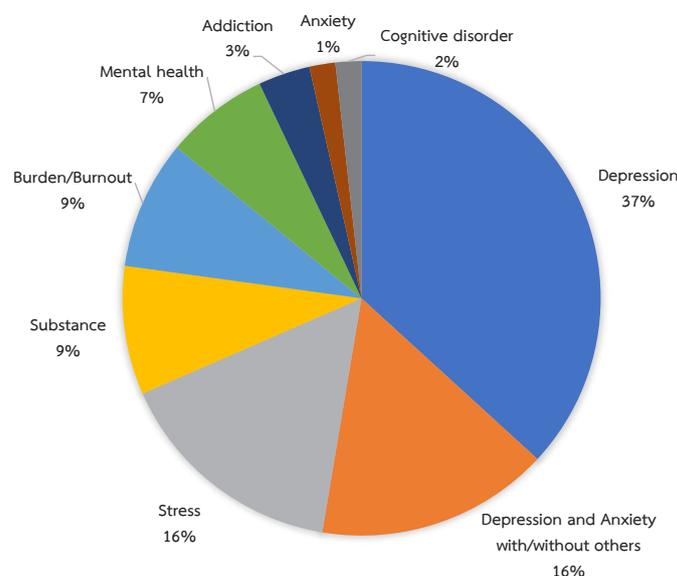


Figure 3. Proportion of articles by category

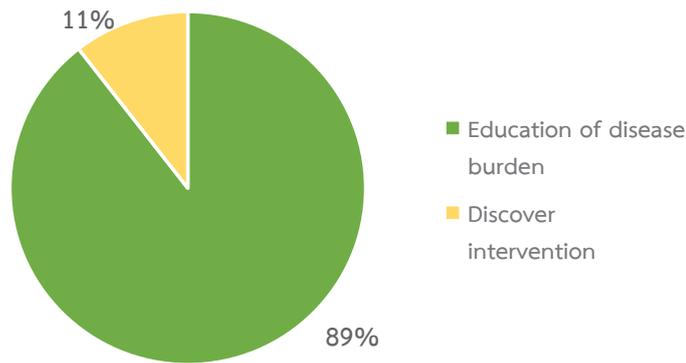


Figure 4. Proportion of articles by purpose of study

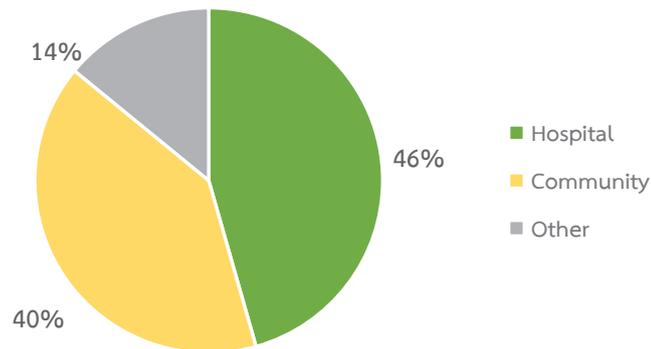


Figure 5. Proportion of articles by research setting

tudinal studies should be suggested to resolve the limitations of cross-sectional studies.¹² The most studied topics are depression (37%), depression and anxiety with/without others and stress (16%), stress (16%), substance use (9%), and burden/burnout (9%). The articles that have been done are relevant to current mental problems globally as WHO reported, depression and anxiety are the most common mental illnesses.⁶

A scoping review of the literature on mental health issues among physicians in North America, showed burnout to be the most frequently studied topic (59%), followed by depression (24%) and distress (8%).¹³ While depression remains a common topic in mental health research, burnout appears to be more prevalent in physician-related studies.

In the Thai National Mental Health Survey 2013, the lifetime prevalence of substance use disorder, anxiety disorders, impulse control disorders, and affective disorders (major depressive disorder, dysthymia, bipolar disorder) was 26.5%, 1.6%, 1.3%, and 0.7%, respectively.⁹ However, in this study, depression and anxiety were the most prevalent mental health issues, while substance use disorder ranked fourth. Thus, substance use

disorder could be an interesting topic for further research.

The prevalence of depression in the community is 6-22% and risk factors included being elderly, single, having alcohol use, amphetamine use, patients with chronic diseases such as diabetes mellitus, moderate/severe dependence on ADLs, poor sleep quality, insufficient income, physical illness, and being female.¹⁴⁻¹⁷ The prevalence in hospital settings is 10-17% and risk factors included poor family function, needing a caregiver, low income, being female, and family conflict.^{2,18,19} The data were collected from hospitals, communities, and others (secondary data and survey) 46%, 40%, and 14%, respectively. This might show that existing family physicians in Thailand conduct research both in hospitals and communities. WONCA advocates a transition away from stigmatized, long-term institutional care for individuals with mental illness, towards more inclusive and respectful community-based support models to respect the rights of people with mental health conditions.⁸ In a previous study, home-based treatment, integrated within the community, significantly reduced depressive symptoms and improved health status in chroni-

cally medically ill older adults with minor depression and dysthymia.²⁰ This can also be studied with similar results in Thailand, therefore community-based research (CBR) would be an alternative approach to fostering individual growth by nurturing community strengths and cultivating problem-solving skills.²¹

According to the WONCA vision, which prioritizes both understanding the global burden of depression and mental health disorders and developing interventions to promote mental well-being,⁸ Thai family physicians' research during the past two decades focused heavily on understanding the existing situations and risk factors of depression and mental health (89%), while intervention or treatment research constituted only 11%. Interestingly, all intervention or treatment articles were published from 2000-2020. This is a gap for future research to find new interventions integrated with primary care to support easier accessibility to mental health treatment in the community.

Among the research studies on interventions, two had family physicians listed as the first author. In the other four studies, the first authors were not family physicians. There are interesting points in the intervention or treatment articles. A recent study suggests that superimposed binaural beat-based interventions may be more effective in reducing anxiety among university students compared to traditional methods such as music listening and general relaxation techniques.²² One of the intervention articles examined the effects of a home visit program by a youth volunteer on the health-related quality of life of elderly persons living in a rural community. The program was conducted for 18 weeks, resulting in a positive effect on overall health status and a decrease in depression,²³ consistent with findings by Kerse et al. (2010) that improved mood and quality of life for older people with depressive symptoms.²⁴ A meta-analysis provides evidence for the effectiveness of both home-based psychological intervention and the combination of home-based psychological and exercise interventions in treating depression. Among these options, the combined approach demonstrated the most favorable outcomes.²⁵ A Randomized controlled trial shows the peer-oriented, community-based intervention designed to reduce methamphetamine (MA) use

and sexual risk behavior also resulted in a substantial reduction in depressive symptoms, independent of changes in MA use.²⁶

The RCFPT recognizes the importance of mental health and has included it in the FM curriculum as a topic called "Human Behavior and Mental Health".²⁷ Primary care doctors play a crucial role in addressing mental health needs. They are the first point of contact within the formal health system and offer various essential services. These include identifying mental health issues early, managing common mental illnesses with other related factors, managing patients with stable psychiatric conditions, referring individuals to specialists when necessary, addressing the mental health aspects of people with physical health and social concerns, and promoting mental health and preventative strategies.^{7,27}

This study's strength lies in its scoping review of mental health issues addressed by Thai family physicians over the past two decades. However, it includes research articles found in Famscholar, which may result in the review not capturing all the research conducted by Thai family physicians.

Conclusions

A scoping review of 57 mental health articles by Thai family physicians was conducted from 2000 to 2023. The number of articles published has increased in the current decade compared to the previous two. A cross-sectional methodology is a commonly used research design. The majority of research focuses on depression, and studies investigating the local situations and their risk factors, and disease burden outnumber those examining interventions. The study collected data from hospitals and communities in similar amounts. A future gap in study is the need for community-based research to identify new interventions for mental problems.

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