

## FEMINIZATION OF AGEING AND FUNCTIONAL DISABILITY AMONG ELDERLY: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE KANCHANABURI DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM, THAILAND

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**Abstract:** *The rapid demographic transition has caused feminization of ageing which looms particularly large for Thailand. Though several aspects of gender inequality in health have been persisted, an analysis of gender dimension of functional disability among Thai elderly is limited, particularly a longitudinal study. Therefore, this study focuses on gender inequality that falls into physical functional disability by using data of the Kanchanaburi Demographic Surveillance System (KDSS), Thailand, for the years 2000 through to 2004. The sample size of the present study is 3,207 cases whose aged 55 years and above at the initial year of the study (2000). Those people reported that they did not experience any difficulty in activities of daily living (ADL) and then had been followed until 2004. Follow up has been done in order to explore whether they had reported any physical disability at the end of the study (2004). The difficulty of daily living is measured by using reported ADL. Both descriptive statistical and logistic regression (with random effect) analyses are employed. The results revealed that without controlling for other factors, females are more likely to fall into functional disability when compared to their male counterparts. However, gender does not matter when other socioeconomic variables are taken into account. In addition, the results further reveal that age, number of chronic diseases that they had experienced, working status and health behaviours are significant predictors of likelihood of reporting functional disability. The results suggest that future health policy should focus on preventing and reducing chronic diseases as well as promoting healthy behaviours among Thai population to ensure better quality of life for older adults. Also, special programmes need to be implemented in order to address the burden of chronic diseases among female population, which could lead to decrease the difficulties in ADLs occurrences among elderly females.*

**Key Words:** population ageing/ageing and disability/ feminization of ageing

### Introduction

Thailand has been experiencing rapid demographic transition as a consequence of continued declines in fertility and mortality during the last four decades. It has significant impact on the increase of the proportion of older persons (aged 60 and above) in the country. Between 1960 and 2010 the proportion of older persons has increased from 5 per cent to 12 percent and projections show it will continue to increase to 30 per cent by 2050 (Knodel & Napaporn, 2008). The longevity of Thai

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