

ABSTRACT

Racial and ethnic minorities tend to have poor quality of health care. To reduce health inequities and to promote the health status of ethnic minorities, it is required to know the barriers and needs of the ethnic groups. It is estimated that one third of population in Myanmar are ethnic minorities and Lisu is one of them. Understanding health seeking behavior especially from ethnic minorities is essential to improve health practices and utilization of health services. The aim of this study was to find out the health seeking behavior of Lisu ethnics group from Chaung Gyi village tract, Mogok Township, Mandalay Region.

A community-based cross-sectional descriptive study design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches was conducted to find out the health seeking behavior of Lisu ethnics from Chaung Gyi village tract, Mogok Township during September to December, 2015. Total number of 170 Lisu (18 years and above) were interviewed for quantitative data by using semi-structured pre-tested questionnaire. For qualitative data individual in-depth interviews and key informant interviews were also conducted.

Among 170 respondents, 66.3% were primary school level and below. Half of the respondents had monthly family income lower than 40000 kyat. . Regarding the distribution of illness within last one month, influenza and gastrointestinal problems were common health problems. If the respondents got illness, about 21% treated at health centre and the remaining 79% didn't go to health centre and treated with other methods such as Mae-Kalaung scratching practice and other traditional methods, self treatment, treated with unqualified allopaths and treated at private clinic. The respondents treated at hospital if the illness became severe and not relieved by other methods. Family income, presence of underlying disease, availability of health facilities including the health centre and health staff, travelling time to nearest health centre and affordability to health care cost were factors associated with health seeking behaviors and utilization of health services of study population from study area. The study also revealed that there was also transportation barrier in case of hospitalization.

In conclusion the believes on the traditional treatment practice, lack of formal health care services and growing of informal health care might influence the health seeking behavior of Lisu population from those area.