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**DETERMINANTS OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AMONG
ADOLESCENTS**

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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation : Determinants of Reproductive Health among Adolescents
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The purpose of this research is to study the factors which are the determinants of reproductive health among adolescents – the concerned aspects of reproductive health were premarital sex, responsibility and safer sex and reproductive hygiene. As a result of literature review, carried out to determine the scope of the research, it was hypothesized that the following 5 factors which to some extent affect reproductive health among adolescents – firstly gender; secondly personal characteristics and background, including age, academic achievement, mother's education living arrangements, school district and regional location; thirdly, the effects of socialization including influences from family, friends, school and mass media; fourthly, socio-cultural, including knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, knowledge or understanding of responsibility and safer sex, sexual values and attitudes towards sexual and reproductive health and finally, life skill concerning sexual and reproductive health which include refusal skill and ability in coping with sexual problems.

The data used in this research was obtained from field work carried out over the period December 2003 – March 2004, with the sampled group comprising of 1,830 adolescent male students and 2,175 adolescent female students, undertaking Matthayomsuksa 1-6 during the second semester of the 2003 academic year and can be considered a valid sample, representing the national adolescent population as a result of the sampling method used – based on region, academic zone, province, school and classrooms respectively.

With respect to premarital behavior among adolescent, the result of this research indicates that 16.2 % of the male sample and 5.5% of the female sample have had premarital sex. The average age for the first sexual experience for male adolescent is

14.79 years old while that of the female adolescent is 15.18 years old. The maximum hazard rate of premarital sex for male adolescent was at the age of 15, while the maximum rate for female adolescent was at the age of 16. The youngest age for the first sexual encounter for male adolescent is 8 while the age for the female is 10. As for factors relating to responsible and safer sex, it was found that 50.2% of male adolescent use contraception during their first sexual experience while only 40.2% of female adolescent did. Finally, in terms of reproductive hygiene among adolescents, it was found that most adolescents are reasonably well behaved but approximately one third of male adolescent and about half of the female adolescent are failing to adequately maintain genital hygiene. Gender difference between male and female adolescents in sexual experience still remain, however, this gap of difference is tending to decrease.

Analysis to determine factors influencing reproductive health among adolescents suggests that personal characteristics and background are the most relevant factors in premarital sexual behavior, while the only factor influencing contraceptive usage among adolescents is the socialization. Finally, in analyzing factors determining reproductive hygiene, it was found that the most influential factor which explains the variation of adolescents' reproductive hygiene among adolescent was the socialization factor. The influence of friends, and life skill concerning sexual and reproductive health were noticeably found to have a relationship with reproductive health behavior of adolescents in most aspects.

As a result of this research, support and promotion should be given to all concerned: father, mother, parents, teachers and peers so as to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to provide the most up-to-date and appropriate information with sexual education to adolescent, as well as to educate and stimulate social awareness with regard to gender rights, equity and equality, and to hold an intervention program, aimed at building up life skills – including sexual and reproductive health – to all adolescents.

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