SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN THAILAND: COMPARING CASES TREATED IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF BANGKOK

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Abstract. The study aims to report annual demographic characteristics and to compare the differences of socioeconomic inequality, type of motor vehicles, and seating relating to major bone injuries among hospitals in and outside Bangkok. Six public hospitals in Bangkok and six regional hospitals in the provinces were studied over a one year period (2008-2009). There were 3,650 cases: 3,596 injured patients and 54 deaths. Patients with a lower education level accounted for the largest number of cases, both in the provinces (46.3%) and Bangkok (17.1%). Their incomes were less than THB 10,000/yearly. Total number of motorcycle cases (3,360) was higher (11.6:1) than 290 cases of motor vehicles. Pickup cars were used more commonly. Riding a motorcycle was likely to be fatal. The front seat was the most common involvement. Passengers occupying the middle and rear seat of the motorcycle were involved in 16.0% and 1.0% cases, respectively. Long bone and joints were the most common injuries. The results strongly confirmed the striking contribution of motorcycles and pickups to road traffic accidents. People with a low educational level, in conjunction with low income, and in areas outside of Bangkok were more at risk. Specific education on road safety should be delivered, preferably in primary schools.

Keywords: road traffic accidents, socioeconomic inequality, educational level, seating position

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