Randomized control trial to evaluate a model of community integrated intermediary care (CIIC) services for older adults in Thailand

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Background
Globally, healthy life expectancy significantly lags behind life expectancy. The average difference between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at birth is 12.2% across all WHO regions. Therefore, as people live longer, the probability increases that people will develop and manage chronic conditions that require some health care.

In 2016, 16% of the Thai population was 60 years and over, which is projected to increase to 33% by 2040. Thailand is in the process of improving its care system and policies for the continuous care of older people, especially for those suffering from chronic diseases. Care in Thailand for older people is still primarily dependent on the family, which may not be sustainable.

The Community Integrated Intermediary Care (CIIC) service is a new model that includes screening and assessment of older people’s needs, capacity building among family members for care, short-term stay facilities, and timely referral to other services.

Goal
Using a cluster randomized controlled trial, this study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the CIIC model and whether it results in better functional ability and quality of life for older people and is sustainable and cost-effective.

Methods
Six clusters in the intervention arm will implement the CIIC model with 2000 older adults. Six other clusters will act as the control arm providing usual care only among 2000 older adults. Three main outcomes will be measured:

1. Levels of family caregiver stress as measured by a version of Novak and Guest’s Caregiver Burden Inventory (CBI).
2. The functional ability and quality of life of older adults, measured through ADL assessments and an adapted version of the EuroQol EQ-5D-5L.
3. The incremental cost and cost of the intervention.

Expected outputs from the research
1. A rigorous evaluation of the CIIC model with a policy brief and peer reviewed publication on the application of the CIIC model for health systems strengthening in Thailand and other similar countries.
2. Policy recommendations for improvements to the continuing care system for older adults in Thailand.