

## **P-527 - TRAPPED IN THOUGHTS: DEPRESSION EXPERIENCES FROM THAI MEN**

S.Rungreangkulkij<sup>1</sup>, I.Kotnara<sup>1</sup>, W.Kittiwattanapaisan<sup>1</sup>, S.Arunpongpaisal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>WHO Collaborating Center for Research and Training on Gender and Women's Health, Faculty of Nursing, Khon Kaen University, <sup>2</sup>Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand

Depressive disorder is known to be higher in women than in men. Depressive symptoms in men are often undiagnosed and untreated because of the concern about masculinity and how men conceptualize depression. In Thailand, the experiences of Thai men with depression have received relatively little attention. The lack of understanding on patients' explanatory models can increase the likelihood that treatments suggested by health care providers will not be complied. The aim of this qualitative study was to describe the experiences of depression in Thai men. Twenty-one men with major depressive disorder were in-depth interviewed. Data were analyzed based on Colaizzi's method. The identified themes relating to the experience of depression included trapped in their thoughts, upside down, leaning on something, life is spiralling down, and weakness. The study also found that male patients suffered from gender role internalization. They first sought help from physicians in a private clinic or general hospital for headache and insomnia, however, they were not educated about depression by their physicians. Symptoms management included engaging in pleasure activities, practicing Buddhism, and alcohol drinking. All participants expressed that understanding the diagnosis was a validation that they were not weak, instead, with an illness. Still, they did not want to be seen as a patient, and many stated ceasing taking medication. Many participants expressed that taking medication is a symbol of sickness. The findings suggest that effective psychoeducation program on depressive disorder is needed. Mental illness treatment should be integrated in a primary care setting.