

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

HIV/AIDS has been a growing problem in Thailand for more than a decade. Prevention programmes have contributed to a decline in the number of new infections. However the number of people presenting with AIDS will continue to increase in the future due to the duration of the latency period from infection to the appearance of symptoms.

Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Hospital, is a 350 beds public hospital in Nonthaburi designated by the Centre for Disease Control as a reference site for care and treatment of HIV / AIDS. A holistic approach to patient care is practiced which includes both psychosocial and clinical aspects of care. Patient support groups have been promoted as an effective adjunct to the overall management of HIV/AIDS patients (Bishop, 1994, Kaplan et al 1993, Leethongin, 1992, Nitipong, 1992, Sariyaporn et al 1995 and Posthuma, 1996). This is proving to be highly regarded by patients and their families and friends as being beneficial.

HIV positive pregnant women are emerging as a group of patients with special support needs not adequately catered for by the current patient support groups. These women have the added dimensions of caring for their child, the effect on other siblings and issues with the father of the child in addition to the impact of HIV common to other patients. To address the specific needs of these women a one year pilot project regarding the establishment of a 'self-help clinic' was

commenced in the Ante-natal Care unit, Bamrasnaradura Infectious Disease Hospital in September 2000. The objective was to increase knowledge and skills, raise self esteem and build confidence in these women to manage their difficult circumstances in the most effective way.

This thesis provides details of the project and its implementation during the first 3 months. Chapter 2 explains in more details why the project has been implemented in the hospital and the approaches used during the implementation are outlined with an emphasis on the participants involved in the project. In Chapter 3, monitoring and evaluation plans are discussed. This includes the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation design, the data collection methods and data analysis and results. Discussion of the results from the first 3 month implementation and recommendations are outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 to provide further information and analysis of the project's outcome and discusses the implications for community and health care settings.