

CHAPTER 5.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to assess the knowledge of HIV/AIDS of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year nursing students and to determine the attitude of the same nursing students about the care of HIV/AIDS. To obtain these data, a survey was conducted among 351 certificate level of the nursing students who were studying in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year certificate level in three campuses of Kathmandu, Nepal. Self administered questionnaire was used to collect the data.

In this study, it was found that the majority of the respondents (92.9%) were under 21 years of age and single. Most of these nursing students enter the program either directly from school leaving certificate (S.L.C.)² or from secondary education. Religious affiliation included predominantly Hindu 89.7%.

When asked if they had cared for HIV/AIDS patients, out of 351 respondents, only 67 (19.1%) said yes and majority of the students 284 (80.9%) said no. There was limited number of HIV/AIDS patients in Nepal at the time this study was

²certificate which is given after completing 10 grade

being done, 486 cases of 21.5 million population (Central Bureau of Statistics 1996 (4)). The opportunity for caring for patients with HIV/AIDS was therefore limited.

When the experience in taking care of HIV/AIDS patients was examined according to the years in nursing campus it was shown that the proportion of experience were increased as they progressed through the nursing program. The result indicated that the 3rd year students had more experience (42.31%) and the first year students had less experience (4.88%) (Table 4.2). There was statistically significant difference at P value <0.05 level.

The respondents who had experience in taking care of AIDS patients were mostly from Lalitpur nursing campus (32.8%) and from Maharajgunj nursing campus (19.8%). The interesting finding was that all of the respondents from Bir hospital nursing campus had no experience in taking care of AIDS patients. The reason for this might be due to not having provision for keeping infected patients especially HIV/AIDS in that clinical area where the students of Bir hospital nursing campus usually practice for their clinical experiences. They have to take the students in another hospital (Teku hospital) for clinical experience in infected cases. For clinical

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experience, they schedule the third year students only and during the last period of their clinical experience.

Although more than 80% of the respondents had no experience in taking care of HIV/AIDS patients, there were no differences between the mean knowledge score and experience in taking care of HIV/AIDS patients. The result of the t- test of the total knowledge score for respondents with and without experience in taking care of HIV/AIDS patients indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean knowledge score of respondents and the experience in taking care of HIV/AIDS patients. The P value was at >0.05 level.

The result of this study showed that, students' knowledge about HIV/AIDS increased as they progressed through the nursing program. As anticipated, the second and third year nursing students had the highest mean knowledge score, 16.048 and 15.673 respectively. The year in the nursing campus made a significant difference in knowledge mean score though the 2nd year and 3rd year students obtained more or less equal mean knowledge score. Their score may have been influenced by more extensive education and practice experience received as part of the nursing program in comparison with students at the beginning level.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) also revealed significant differences in knowledge score across the group $f = 24.377$, $p \text{ value} = < 0.05$. This result supports the 1st hypothesis.

Regarding the mean knowledge score of students according to age, marital status and religion, there were no significant differences, $p \text{ value} > 0.05$ level.

According to the result of knowledge score of the respondents, in general, the nursing students displayed moderate scores on the knowledge questions. When these scores were examined more closely or according to the subscale, the score was high for the questions dealing with transmission 88.51% and management and care 88.32% (Table 4.7). But it shows that they still lack knowledge in universal precaution (72.51%). This knowledge is essential to the students because there is chance of being occupational exposure to HIV/AIDS if they do not apply appropriate universal precaution while taking care of HIV/AIDS patients. The greatest knowledge deficit was observed in relation to etiology/clinical aspects 62.75% and in AIDS status of Nepal 60.04%.

In relation to the attitude of the students towards HIV/AIDS the result of the study showed that, as students progressed through the nursing program, the attitude score also increased. There was a difference between mean attitude scores of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year nursing students. The 3rd year, which is the last year of the nursing program had the highest attitude score. This difference may have been related to feeling sympathy and having experience in taking care of HIV/AIDS patients (Table 4.9).

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) also indicated statistically significant difference in attitude among the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year nursing students. The result of P value was in <0.05 level. These results support the 2nd hypothesis.

There were significant differences between mean scores in some of the demographic variables. The study indicates statistically significant difference in mean attitude scores of the students according to their age. The respondents between the age of 22 years above had the highest mean attitude score of 15.320 and SD of 2.673.

There was statistically significant difference between mean attitude score among students according to their experience in taking care of HIV/AIDS patients at p

value < 0.05 (Table 4.12).

Although, majority of the students agreed that every student should have experience in taking care of HIV/AIDS patients (83.8%), (see Appendix 4.2), almost 37.0% replied that they were not glad and not ready to give nursing care to HIV/AIDS patients, and nearly 31.0% of the respondents said that they would drop out from their study if they were assigned to take care of HIV/AIDS patients, and they would feel upset when they learned that they had to take care of HIV/AIDS patients (21.1%). This means that, still some of them are afraid to take care of HIV/AIDS patients. This fear might decrease if they get more knowledge about transmission of the disease, how it is transmitted and how it is not transmitted and about universal precaution of taking care of HIV/AIDS patients.

The main findings of this study is that while student gained knowledge on HIV/AIDS as they progressed through the nursing program, attitude scores also improved comparatively. Other studies also reported that increasing knowledge about HIV/AIDS among health care professionals results in more positive attitudes towards HIV/AIDS.