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CHUTIMON TUESUPPRASERT : THE EFFECTS OF PROMOTING A PROGRAM OF PATIENTS' SELF-CARE IN HAND EXERCISE ON POSTOPERATIVE RECOVERY IN CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME WOMEN. THESIS ADVISORS : VARATTAMA SUKVATTANANAN, D.N.S. YUWADEE LUECHA, Ed.D. ADISAK SUNGPET, M.D. 86 P. ISBN 974-662-644-2

Hand exercise is important for postoperative recovery in Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) patients. The main purpose of this quasi-experimental research was to determine the effects of promoting a program of patients' self-care in hand exercise on postoperative recovery in CTS women. Orem's theory of self-care was used as the conceptual framework for this study. The subjects were 40 CTS patients for day surgery at Ramathibodi Hospital between December 1998 - April 1999. Subjects were selected by purposive sampling and were assigned into equal experimental and control groups by matching age and education level. The experimental group received a program in promoting patients' self-care in hand exercise in a supportive-educative system by the researcher and the control group received routine nursing from hospital staff. The intervention program consisted of pictures and a manual of self-care in postoperative CTS patients, with teaching, demonstration and a return demonstration in hand exercise program. A good relationship between the researcher and the subjects was used to determine the appropriate method (guidance, support and provision of a developmental environment and teaching) to promote patients' self-care performance. The data was collected by interview and postoperative condition was measured on postoperative days 3, 7 and 14. Analysis of data was by independent t-test.

The results of this study revealed that the patients in the experimental group had significantly less edema in the hand than patients in the control group ($p < 0.01$). The patients in the experimental group used significantly fewer analgesics on the second postoperative day than patients in the control group ($p < 0.05$). In addition, the patients in the experimental group had significantly more range of finger motion than patients in the control group ($p < 0.05$) and finally the patients in the experimental group had no postoperative complications but four patients in the control group had postoperative complications. The results of the study can be used as information and guidelines for nurses and other hospital staff who work with day surgery patients. The self-care program could also be promoted to other types of patients in similar situations to advance patients' self-care performance.