

Abstract

The purposes of this study were to investigate knowledge and practice of nurses working at the Maharaj Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital concerning preparation and administration of chemotherapeutic agents, and to study problems relating to handling of the agents as stated by the nurses.

Eighty two nurses who currently had experience in preparing, mixing and administering parenteral chemotherapeutic drugs were interviewed using structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was evaluated by 10 experts to establish content validity. Reliability was obtained by interviewing 10 nurses who had experience in handling of chemotherapeutic agents at the Mc Cormick Hospital, Chiang Mai. The reliability of knowledge and practice versions were 0.90 and 0.37 respectively.

The results of the study were:

- 1) The majority of the respondents were female with bachelor degree in nursing, working as staff nurses in medical, general and pediatrics wards. Their working years ranged from 1-5 and they performed activities relating to chemotherapeutic agents less than 5 times a week. These nurses obtained knowledge concerning handling of the agents by means of self-studying.

- 2) With respect to the scores of nurse's knowledge and practice concerning handling of chemotherapeutic agents, the study indicated that most nurses knew about the protective measures and followed the guidelines

in almost every aspect. These aspects included preparation of setting, preparation activities, withdrawing chemotherapeutic agent from ampule, withdrawing chemotherapeutic agent from vial, administering chemotherapeutic agent or assisting a physician in administering the agent, prevention of direct skin contact and inhalation of the aerosolized drugs, disposal of contaminated equipments and supplies and cleaning contaminated areas, and others precautions and measures. The relationships between nurse's scores of knowledge and nurse's scores of practice, when comparing aspect by aspect, ranged between .37 to .88.

It was noticeable that the respondents did not follow some measures and precautions despite having known about them. These precautions were wearing long-sleeve gown, wearing mask, wearing double gloves while cleaning contaminated areas and attending annual physical examination. The reasons given included not necessary, not enough equipments and supplies and not being encouraged by the administrators. Interestingly, none of the respondents knew how the contaminated equipments and supplies were destroyed in this hospital.