

The amputees caused from the accident are usually found in young adult and the number is increasing every year. Amputation of an extremity affects the patient's ability to care for himself and leads to physical and psychosocial problems. Helping the amputees in physiological and psychological rehabilitation is essential in order to increase their abilities to achieve the highest level of function and participation in life activities. In taking care of the amputees, nurses should realize selected factors that may influence the amputees' self-care behavior in order to promote their living normally. Using Orem's Self-care theory as a theoretical framework in studying the relationship among self-esteem, social support and self-care behavior of the amputees. The sample was composed of 100 outpatient

amputees who came to follow up at the prosthetic clinics at Siriraj, Pramongkutklao and Lerd Sin Hospitals. The instruments were composed of five sets of questionnaires, i.e., degree of deformity record, demographic data, Self-esteem, Social support and Self-care behavior questionnaires. Statistical techniques were implemented on the process of data analysis by using SPSS* program for percentage, arithmetic means, standard deviation, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient and the stepwise multiple regression.

The results showed that :

1. There was a significantly positive correlation between self-esteem and self-care behavior at the .05 level ($r = .2254$)

2. There was a significantly positive correlation between social support and self-care behavior at the .001 level ($r = .6467$)

3. There was a significantly negative correlation between age and self-care behavior at the .05 level ($r = -.1708$)

4. There was a significantly negative correlation between length of being the amputee and self-care behavior at the .001 level ($r = -.4052$)

5. The results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis showed that 47.13 percent of the variances of self-care behavior was accounted for by two significant predictors, that is, social support and length of being the amputee.

On the basis of this study, the recommendations are presented as the following. Nurses should encourage the amputees' social network to provide support and care to the amputees and enhance patient's self-esteem. They should work with the physical therapist and occupational therapist in teaching and supervising the amputees with a prosthesis in self-care activities so that they are able to have a normal life.