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RUNGRAT WANICHAPICHAT: STRESS, COPING RESOURCES, AND  
CONSTRAINTS AGAINST UTILIZING COPING RESOURCES OF RELATIVES OF  
ADULT PATIENTS IN THE ICU. THESIS ADVISORS: ORASA PANPAKDEE, B.Sc.  
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The purpose of this study was to explore stress, coping resources, and constraints against utilizing coping resources of relatives of adult patient in the ICU. Lazarus and Folkman's theory of stress, appraisal, and coping was used as a conceptual framework for this study. The convenient sample of 64 relatives who were spouses, parents or children and were the most significant and closet to the patients was selected to be the informants. All of them visited the patients within the first 2-5 days after admission to the medical and surgical intensive care unit at Sawanpracharak Hospital from May to July, 1999. Two instruments were used in this study: the Demographic questionnaire and Perceived stressful situation, coping resources, and constraints against utilizing coping resources questions. The data were collected by interviewing the informants and were analyzed by using content analysis and reported in terms of percentage.

Results of the study revealed that the relatives perceived 1-5 stressful situations during the patients' admission to the ICU. Stressful situations appraised by most relatives were perceived severity of the illness (95.3 %), followed by financial problems (57.8 %), disruption of normal routines (23.4 %), decreased stability of the family (21.9 %), and lack of information about patient's diagnosis and plan of treatment (6.3 %). The relatives reported their coping resources including: 1) health and energy: they perceived they were healthy (89.1%); 2) problem-solving skills: the ability to make decisions and choose methods to conduct their routine tasks (62.5%), to plan for problem solving (46.8%), and to seek information (32.8%); 3) social skills: the ability to communicate with people for consulting and ventilating with (92.2%), for seeking help (53.1%), and for seeking information (39.1%); 4) positive beliefs: having hope (67.2%), trust in staff competency (43.8%), spiritual belief (28.1%). Another psychological resource in Thai culture was the concept of "TAMJAI" which helped the relatives cope by accepting the situation of the eventual loss of the patients (32.8%) and strengthening their mind for fighting obstacles (31.1%); 5) social support: having someone to listen to their problems (90.6%), having someone to give advice (78.1%), having financial assistance (34.4%), and having assistance in routine tasks (31.3%); and 6) material resources: receiving reimbursement (81.2%), having suitable accommodations for going to visit patients (81.3%). A few relatives reported that they had certain constraints such as they felt uncomfortable to seek information about the patient's condition from health care providers (6.3%) and there was a limitation of ICU visiting time policy (6.3%).

The results of this study ought to be used for the information to develop the instruments that can be used to assess the relative's stress, coping resources, and constraints against utilizing coping resources and to plan specific nursing interventions for the relatives of patients admitted to the ICU.