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 LEVEL OF INDEPENDENCE

ORAPAN THOSINGHA: THE EFFECTS OF TRANSITIONAL CARE ON FACILITATING SEVERELY BURN SURVIVORS FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME. THESIS ADVISORS: SIRIORN SINDHU, D.N.S. TASSANA BOONTONG, Ph.D., AFAF MELEIS, PhD,Dr.PS(hon),FAAN. 191 p. ISBN 974-663-605-7

This study is a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group. It aimed at the evaluation of the effects of transitional care in facilitating severely burnt survivors from hospital to home. The study was carried out over an eleven-month period from November 1998 to October 1999. The participants were 45 males and 15 females, with ages ranging from 15 to 72 years, who were hospitalized in a burn unit because of burn injuries of greater than 15% of their body. Most of them were of productive age (21-40 years), had sustained flame injuries, had burn injuries at workplaces, were in class III of impairment and had deformities. The average length of hospital stay was 47.35 days. All participants were enrolled into the study when they were informed of their hospital discharge. After being enrolled into the study, they were matched by their hospital-settings, gender, age group, and class of impairment and then were randomly assigned into the experimental group (30 participants), and the control group (30 participants).

The experimental group obtained transitional care, a nursing therapy based on transitional theory, empowerment ideology and knowledge related to burn care from the investigator while the control group obtained nursing care as routinely conducted by nursing staff at the burn unit. The transitional care was started on the day that patients were enrolled into the study and continued until the eighth week after the patients departed from the hospital. The outcomes that were measured in this study included doing to obtain wellness, level of independence, and physical symptoms.

It was found that patients who obtained transitional care showed significantly higher scores on the doing to obtain wellness scale, significantly higher scores in level of independence, and had significantly less physical symptoms than patients who obtained routine care as conducted by nursing staff at the p-value of less than 0.001. It was also found that patients who obtained transitional care demonstrated a higher return to work rate than patients who obtained traditional nursing care. The evidence from the study revealed that transitional care had effects on patients' physical health and functional health. It offered an extended care that can facilitate patients in their transition to health. An effort to make transitional care possible and sustainable is recommended. Further study should be conducted to test the feasibility of this transitional care.