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PRISANA CHOEYSIRI : KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARD  
MENTAL ILLNESS AND CAREGIVER-PATIENT RELATIONSHIPS: A STUDY  
OF CAREGIVERS OF PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS IN SOUTHERN  
PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL. THESIS ADVISORS : ATIRAT WATTANAPAILIN,  
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The purpose of this descriptive research was to study the caregiver's knowledge and attitudes toward mental illness and caregiver-patient relationships in 340 caregivers who treated the psychiatric patients in Suansaranrom hospital on an inpatient basis. These psychiatric patients were diagnosed with schizophrenia, mood (affective) disorder, mental and behavioral due to substance use, and psychosis.

The instruments for data collection were questionnaires composed of 5 parts: demographic data of caregivers, demographic data of psychiatric patients, caregiver's knowledge about mental illness, caregiver's attitudes toward mental illness, and the caregiver-patient relationships. Content validity was assessed by 3 experts in psychiatric care. The reliability of the knowledge about mental illness was analyzed by Kuder - Richardson's equation (KR 20) at 0.76. Cronbach' alpha coefficient was used to analyze attitudes toward mental illness and the caregiver-patient relationships at 0.82 and 0.80 respectively. The derived data were analyzed and reported by frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

The results of this study showed that most caregivers (62.1%) had good knowledge about mental illness. The caregivers had moderate attitude toward mental illness (  $\bar{X}$ =2.89, SD=0.37), and the caregiver-patient relationships was good (  $\bar{X}$ =3.35, SD=0.34). Nurses should give caregivers information about aspects of mental illness especially continuity of psychiatric drugs, and support appropriate attitudes toward mental illness.