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SARIKA SOMSRI: FACTORS RELATED TO ETHICAL  
ISSUES OF STAFF NURSES IN CARING FOR HIV/AIDS PATIENTS.  
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This study was a descriptive research project that examined the ethical issues that occur when nurses care for HIV/AIDS patients and relationship of these issues to some nurse's factors such as age, educational level, marital status, experience in caring, and work situation. The research samples consisted of 494 staff nurses of 8 general hospitals and 2 specialized hospitals under the Ministry of Public Health in Bangkok and its suburbs, who had at least one year of experience in caring for HIV/AIDS patients. Data were collected by self-report questionnaires which were modified from the Ethical Issues Scale of Chaowalit. The Ethical Issues Scale consisted of 6 elements: Avoiding Care for Patients, Discrimination/Rejection of Patients, Non-involvement of Patient/ Family in Treatment Decision, Uncooperative Family/Staff in Patient Care, Protecting Others from Harm, and Protecting Patients' Information. Chi-square was used to analyze the relationship between variables.

The results showed that most staff nurses encountered ethical issues at a low level when they provided care for HIV/AIDS patients. "Protecting Patients' Information" was the most common situation which nurses encountered, and "Avoiding Caring for Patients" was the ethical issue which seldom occurred when they care for HIV/AIDS patients. The factors related to the occurrence of ethical issues of staff nurses in caring for these patients were age ( $\chi^2 = 3.949$ ,  $p = .046$ ), educational level ( $\chi^2 = 9.125$ ,  $p = .01$ ), and work situation ( $\chi^2 = 14.946$ ,  $p = .0001$ ). The younger the staff nurses, the greater the occurrence of the ethical issues. The higher the education level, the greater the occurrence of ethical issues. Specialized hospitals had lower occurrences of ethical issues than general hospitals, which is reflected by the fact that nurses in specialized hospitals have completed coursework about ethics and HIV/AIDS after basic nursing preparation. The specialized hospitals had staff nurses who had completed more coursework than nurses in the general hospitals. There was no statistically significant relationship between the occurrence of ethical issues and marital status, and experience in caring for HIV/AIDS patients.

The results provide staff nurses who care for HIV/AIDS patients with a means of preparation for direct involvement in ethical issues and for the provision of high quality patient care. Supportive, educational programs are crucial in helping these staff nurses to make appropriate decisions. Nursing administrators and nursing educators should be concerned and provide facilitative support for such programs.