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RAWEEPAN BUN-EIAM : COMPLIANCE WITH HANDWASHING TECHNIQUES BY PROFESSIONAL NURSES IN CRITICAL CARE UNITS, CHULALONGKORN HOSPITAL. THESIS ADVISOR : KRONGKARN SANGKARD Ph.D. (Education), SUVIMOL KIMPEE M. Ed., SOMWANG DANCHAIVIJITR M.D., F.R.C.P. 124 p. ISBN 974-589-035-9

Nosocomial infection is a major problem in health care service, especially in intensive care units. Contact by hand is an important mechanism of infection. In order to prevent the infection, handwashing is the best procedure. Nurses provide direct care to patients and they have a major role in preventing the spread of infection by proper handwashing.

This study on the compliance with handwashing guidelines, and on the relationship between predisposing, enabling, reinforcing factors and handwashing practices was done with 64 professional nurses in 2 critical care units at Chulalongkorn Hospital. Data were collected by using the observation checklists and questionnaires.

1. Before invasive procedures, 92.19 percent did not wash their hands, and after invasive procedures, 27.34 percent did not wash their hands. Prior to non-invasive procedures, 94.35 percent did not wash their hands, and after the procedures, 35.94 percent did not wash their hands. Handwashing techniques were not correct in 98.95 percent of cases; 78.64 percent did not rub their hands thoroughly and 90.10 percent washed too briefly.

2. The knowledge on handwashing was at the medium level and the attitude to handwashing was good. Facilities for handwashing were at the good level. Reinforcing factors for handwashing were good.

3. Significant positive correlation was found between the knowledge of, attitudes to handwashing, and handwashing techniques. There was no significant correlation between enabling factors, reinforcing factors and handwashing techniques.

The results of this study suggest that nurses in critical care units should be more aware of handwashing guidelines before and after nursing procedures to prevent nosocomial infection. Administrators should provide proper in-service education, on, necessary facilities for, and reinforcing atmosphere for proper handwashing.