

Nurses' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Coping Related to HIV and AIDS in a Rural Hospital in South Africa

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ABSTRACT The aim of this study was to determine nurses' knowledge, attitudes, and coping related to HIV and AIDS in a rural hospital in South Africa. A randomly selected sample of 222 nurses was asked to respond to a self-administered questionnaire. Results indicate that the majority (83.8%) of the sample had a medium level of HIV knowledge and had a positive attitude towards caring of HIV/AIDS patients (75.8%), while a minority had negative attitudes toward caring of patients with HIV/AIDS. Regarding coping, 71.2% of the nurses had a medium level of coping in caring for patients with HIV/AIDS. Attitudes towards caring of HIV/AIDS patients was significantly associated with coping ($r = .31$, $p < .05$). Female nurses displayed a more positive attitude towards caring of HIV/AIDS patients than male nurses ($t = 1.89$, $p < .05$). Nurses who had more than 10 years working experience had a significantly more positive attitude ($t = 2.16$, $p < .05$) and coping ability ($t = 2.35$, $p < .05$) than nurses who had less than 10 years of working experience. In conclusion, nurses had insufficient knowledge about HIV/AIDS, one in four nurses had negative attitude and one in five nurses had low coping ability toward caring HIV/AIDS patients. Therefore, in-services training to update on HIV/AIDS knowledge to modify attitudes towards caring of HIV/AIDS patients should be implemented.