

SUMMARY

240 Staff Nurses from the Colombo South General Hospital were interviewed to assess whether they have adequate knowledge, positive attitudes and good Practices to care for HIV infection/ AIDS patients with out fear and prejudice.

Two groups, the recently passed out Nurses (less than 10 years work experience) and older Nurses (more than 10 years work experience) were compared to see whether there was significant difference in their knowledge, on HIV infection /AIDS.

It was found that the overall knowledge on HIV infection /AIDS was inadequate. But the younger Nurses were significantly better than the older Nurses. $P < 0.05$.

Most of the Nurses had negative attitudes towards HIV/AIDS patients, their rights and ethical issues. There was no significant difference between the younger and older nurses in their attitudes. Younger nurses were biased by older nurses attitudes and social prejudices.

Practice of Universal precautions were poor among all nurses with no significant difference between the two groups. Nurses attributed this lack to unavailability of masks, gowns and gloves.

All these factors highlight the necessity of a clinically orientated continuous education programme for Nurses to upgrade their knowledge, attitudes and Practices. In addition providing them with the necessary equipment is also important.

