

ABSTRACT

Nursing personnel who are regarded as a high risk occupation group, continue to work in the front line providing care for HIV/AIDS patients.

A comparative study was conducted to examine the knowledge attitude and practices of nursing personnel with regards to caring for HIV/AIDS patients.

Information was obtained from a sample of ninety nursing personnel who work at the Kingston Public Hospital, Victoria Jubilee Hospital, Bustamante Hospital for Children, and National Chest Hospital. The group was comprised of Registered Nurses, Midwives, Enrolled Assistant Nurses, Ward Assistants, Operating-room Technicians and Community Health Aides. A self administered questionnaire was used to collect data on various aspects of HIV/AIDS.

For overall knowledge on HIV/AIDS 22 nursing persons received High scores of 38 - 52 of a possible 52 scores, while 59 received Medium scores of 23-37 and Low scores of 8-22 were received by 9 respondents, Registered nurses received the highest scores. As compared to the other

groups e.g. Children, adults, heterosexual male and females who are not prostitutes attitude towards the homosexuals and prostitutes was negative. Although most nursing personnel (70%) had knowledge of universal precautions these precautions were not practised on a continuous basis. Fear of contagion was expressed by all respondents.

There is therefore an urgent need to strengthen these areas of weaknesses such as knowledge of HIV/AIDS and practices with regards to universal precautions, so as to reduce their risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.