

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SELF-HELP CLINIC FOR HIV POSITIVE MOTHERS IN BAMRASNARADURA HOSPITAL



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Abstract

A one year pilot project to establish of a self-help clinic for HIV positive mothers was introduced at the ante-natal Care Unit, Bamrasnaradura Hospital in September 2000. This clinic run peer and professional support activities twice a month. Participants joined activities on a voluntary basis with the aim to help these women adopt adaptive ways of coping with HIV related stressors.

During the first 3 month of the project implementation, 13 HIV positive pregnant women and one HIV positive mother participated in the project. Most women were between 19-30 years old (90.9%) and were new cases of HIV infection who have been known to have acquired HIV infection in the 6 months (81.8%). These women were evaluated prior to and after participation in the project activities to assess the project effectiveness.

Results indicate that after participation in the first implementation of the project, these women demonstrated improvements in HIV knowledge, confidence in self and baby care, positive attitude toward living in society, and socio-psychological well-being. They also demonstrated a decrease in adopting dysfunctional coping strategies and an increase in the functional coping strategies. For later phases of implementation, it is considered that the project needs to focus on activities that will help these women increase functional strategies. The chronic and incurable nature of HIV disease may make it difficult for the women to maintain functional coping strategies once their physical status deteriorates. However such strategies may assist them to maintain independence for a longer period.