Don’t let HIV/AIDS take the Care out of Nursing

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‘Since HIV and AIDS were identified and developed into a world wide epidemic, nurses have remained at the forefront of providing care to those infected.’

Wright et al., 2000

Background
Currently an estimated 42 million people are infected with HIV

- AIDS has already claimed the lives of over 20 million
- 1800 babies are born with HIV each day
- 570,000 children under 15 will die of AIDS this year
- Australia continues to have around 900 new cases each year
- AIDS has cut life expectancy by over 30 years in some African countries

Introduction

- HIV/AIDS patients express concern about the attitude some nurses have towards them
- Literature in the past suggests some nurses are reluctant to care for patients with HIV/AIDS

Aims

- To review recent literature from around the world on the attitudes of nurses and nursing students towards HIV/AIDS
- Identify and extract common themes from the literature
- Discuss implications for nurse education and nursing practice

Methods

Thematic analysis of 15 primary research articles focusing on attitudes and knowledge of HIV/AIDS by nurses and nursing students. Selected articles are published:

- in year 2000 or later
- in peer reviewed journals
- in the English language

Conclusion

- The evidence shows there is a reluctance on the part of some nurses to provide care for people with HIV/AIDS; these negative attitudes continue to persist throughout the world and are at odds with the essence of nursing
- While education and increased knowledge do not always change attitudes, they form the basis from which informed and compassionate attitudes are developed
- There is an obligation upon the nursing profession to develop strategies to overcome negative attitudes and ensure caring continues to be the essence of nursing
- Education, based on research evidence, must play a leading role in this challenge to the nursing profession
- Research is highly recommended into the knowledge and attitudes of Australian nursing students towards HIV/AIDS and people with HIV/AIDS

Major Themes

- Fear of contracting HIV/AIDS
- Reluctance to care for people with HIV/AIDS
- Education and knowledge of HIV/AIDS
- Stigma associated with HIV/AIDS
- Homophobia
- Unsatisfactory work practices and work environment

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References

