

**Results of long-term follow-ups concerning knowledge, attitude, skills and opinions from “Training Workshop on Counseling Techniques on AIDS Prevention and Control” for final year medical students, Chulalongkorn University**

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**Problem / Background** : *The research team has provided the training workshop on “Counseling Techniques for AIDS Prevention and Control for last year medical students of the Faculty of Medicine Chulalongkorn University since 1994. We found that medical students who attended the workshop gained more knowledge, understanding and skills in the process, and techniques of counseling; they were satisfied and appreciated the training. However, a long-term evaluation is needed.*

**Objective** : *To evaluate long-term results concerning knowledge, attitude, skills and opinions of medical students who graduated from Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University, upon the training workshop.*

**Design** : *Descriptive, cross-sectional study*

**Setting** : *Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University*

**Material and Methods** : 300 physicians who graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University from 1998 -2002 were selected by simple random sampling technique. Data collection by using questionnaires sent by post. The questionnaires that had been produced by research team comprised of personal information, knowledge, attitude, viewpoints and suggestions concerning the training workshop. It also focused on the benefits they felt they have gained for their future professional medical practice. The questionnaires had been tested the content validity and reliability with overall Chronbach coefficient was 0.9

**Results** : 210 answers were returned completed, or a total of 70 %. We found that 92 % of them accepted that good communication skill and counseling are important and would be needed in medical practice. 41.5 % felt that training in communication skill from medical curriculum of the faculty was possibly insufficient. 86.2 % found it was difficult to care for, or to treat uncooperative, the terminally ill and dying patients. 97.4 % said they had learned new viewpoints of communication skill and counseling from the training workshop they had participated. We also found that among samples selected physicians, 75 % had attended our training workshop. The physicians who had attended the training workshop had higher score of knowledge, attitude and skill associated with good communication, counseling and holistic approach than those who did not attend the training workshop in every aspect, at a level of statistical significance  $p < .01$ .

**Conclusion** : *Graduated physicians from Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University realized the importance of good communication skill and counseling in their professional medical practices. The training Workshop on counseling techniques on AIDS prevention and control for last year medical students provided by the research team was one of the good and appropriate modules employed. The majority of the participants found the training offered a numbers of benefits. This program could also be provided to general physicians as part of continuing medical education.*

**Key words** : *HIV/AIDS counseling, Training workshop, Last year medical students.*

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- เหตุผลของการทำวิจัย** : คณะผู้วิจัยได้เป็นผู้จัดการประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการ เรื่องเทคนิคการให้การปรึกษาแนะนำ ในการป้องกันและควบคุมโรคเอดส์แก่นิสิตแพทย์ปีสุดท้าย ของคณะแพทยศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย มาตั้งแต่ปีพ.ศ. 2537 พบว่านิสิตแพทย์ที่เข้ารับการฝึกอบรมได้รับความรู้ ความเข้าใจ ทักษะในกระบวนการและเทคนิค การให้การปรึกษาเพิ่มขึ้น ฟังพอใจและชื่นชมการฝึกอบรม จึงเห็นสมควรมีการประเมินและติดตามผลระยะยาว
- วัตถุประสงค์** : เพื่อประเมินผลระยะยาวเกี่ยวกับการประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการ ในด้านความรู้ เจตคติ ทักษะ และข้อคิดเห็นจากแพทย์ที่จบการศึกษาจากคณะแพทยศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย รุ่นที่มีการฝึกอบรม
- รูปแบบการวิจัย** : การศึกษาเชิงพรรณนา ณ จุดเวลาใดเวลาหนึ่ง
- สถานที่ทำการศึกษา** : ภาควิชาจิตเวชศาสตร์ คณะแพทยศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
- ตัวอย่างและวิธีการศึกษา** : แพทย์ที่จบการศึกษาจากคณะแพทยศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย ช่วงปีพ.ศ. 2541-2545 จำนวน 300 คน เลือกตัวอย่างโดยวิธีการสุ่มอย่างง่ายจากรายชื่อผู้จบการศึกษา เก็บข้อมูลโดยส่งแบบสอบถามทางไปรษณีย์ แบบสอบถามประกอบด้วยข้อมูลทั่วไป ความรู้เจตคติ ข้อคิดเห็น ข้อเสนอแนะเกี่ยวกับการฝึกอบรมจากการจัดการประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการที่คณะผู้วิจัยจัดให้เน้นที่ประโยชน์ที่ได้รับและการนำไปใช้ในการประกอบวิชาชีพ

- ผลการศึกษา** : ผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามกลับคืน 210 คน หรือ 70 % พบว่า 92 % ยอมรับว่าทักษะการติดต่อสื่อสารที่ดี และการให้การปรึกษามีความสำคัญและจำเป็นสำหรับการประกอบวิชาชีพแพทย์ 41.5 % คิดว่าการเรียนเรื่องทักษะการติดต่อสื่อสารที่ได้จากหลักสูตรของคณะแพทยศาสตร์ไม่เพียงพอ 86.2 % พบว่ามีความยากลำบากในการให้การดูแลรักษาผู้ป่วยที่ไม่ร่วมมือ ผู้ป่วยระยะสุดท้ายและผู้ป่วยใกล้ตาย 97.4 % เห็นว่าได้รับประโยชน์จากการเข้าฝึกอบรมการประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการที่คณะผู้วิจัยจัดให้ในด้านทักษะการติดต่อสื่อสารและการให้การปรึกษา และพบว่า 75 % ของแพทย์ที่ถูกสุ่มเลือกเป็นตัวอย่างศึกษาเคยเข้ารับการฝึกอบรมการประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการเรื่องเทคนิคการให้การปรึกษาและแนะนำในการป้องกันและควบคุมโรคเอดส์ที่คณะผู้วิจัยจัด และพบว่าแพทย์ที่เคยเข้ารับการฝึกอบรมดังกล่าว มีคะแนนของความรู้ เจตคติ ทักษะที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการติดต่อสื่อสารและการให้การปรึกษา รวมทั้งการดูแลผู้ป่วยแบบองค์รวมสูงกว่าผู้ที่ไม่ได้เข้ารับการฝึกอบรมในทุกด้านอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ น้อยกว่า .01
- สรุป** : แพทย์ที่จบการศึกษาจากคณะแพทยศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย ตระหนักถึงความสำคัญของทักษะการติดต่อสื่อสารที่ดีและการให้การปรึกษาในการประกอบวิชาชีพแพทย์ การฝึกอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการเรื่องเทคนิคการให้การปรึกษาแนะนำเพื่อป้องกันและควบคุมโรคเอดส์ สำหรับนิสิตแพทย์ปีสุดท้ายที่คณะผู้วิจัยจัดให้เป็นรูปแบบที่ดีและเหมาะสม ผู้เข้ารับการฝึกอบรมส่วนใหญ่ได้รับประโยชน์ในหลาย ๆ ด้าน สามารถนำไปใช้กับแพทย์ทั่วไปสำหรับการศึกษาต่อเนื่องได้
- คำสำคัญ** : การให้การปรึกษาเรื่องเอช ไอ วี และเอดส์, การประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการ, นิสิตแพทย์ปีสุดท้าย

AIDS is one among major health problems in Thailand. HIV/AIDS counseling is a strategy in AIDS prevention and control. It is a tool in prevention of HIV transmission. <sup>(1)</sup> Researchers were the leader team who have provided comprehensive training workshop in techniques of advice and counseling on AIDS prevention and control for medical students in their final year of studies at the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University since 1994. This was the first such program in Thailand to be offered. It comprised three and half days of training. <sup>(2)</sup> As an elective outside of the regular curriculum, participants had to apply because of their own interest, and the trainers had to prepare all materials and documents. Research team has modified and developed to be complete learning package module for medical students and general physicians and also conducted short term evaluation from participants every year. <sup>(3-10)</sup> Over this period, the researchers continued to make adjustments to improve the program. Finally, the teaching materials were developed as follows:

- HIV/AIDS Counseling Training Handbook for participants,
- HIV/AIDS Counseling Training Handbook for practical trainers,
- Video demonstration on Medical Counseling,
- Video demonstration on Providing HIV/AIDS Counseling.

These materials were developed to teach medical students by focusing on, providing advice and counseling as a general practitioner and providing advice and counseling on HIV/AIDS that could be applied in their medical practices.

Following short-term assessment, it was found that this training setup in addition to the benefits

achieved by expanding knowledge, attitude and skills in counseling process and techniques for many medical areas, participants also gained benefits in other areas, such as developing holistic approach in medical management, care and treatment of the ill, developing understanding or awareness on bio-psycho-social and spiritual aspects integrated as etiologic process. The training also helped participants develop skills in the joining groups, accepting the assessments of their fellow group members and better self-understanding. They gained knowledge in ethical and legal aspects that was included in the training. In conclusion, long term follow-ups were conducted to learn viewpoints, knowledge, attitude and benefits gained from this training in the communication skill in medical practice, providing counseling and applied in the practice of medical profession .

## Materials and Methods

The research team developed a questionnaire to acquire answers and results from medical students who had graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University. The questionnaire included queries on personal information, knowledge, attitude, viewpoints and suggestions concerning this training workshop on counseling techniques on AIDS prevention and control for final year medical students. It also focused on the benefits they felt they derived from the training and application for their future professional medical practice. The questionnaires had been tested the content validity and reliability. The overall Chronbach coefficient was 0.9. The questionnaires were sent by post to 60 former participants of each batch over a five-year, from 1998– 2002, or a total of 300 students. Sample

selection was made by simple random sampling technique. Of these, 210 were returned completed, or a total of 70 %.

## Results

A total of 210, or 70 %, of all questionnaires were received completed. Information concerning those that completed the forms, or participated in the study, is provided in Table 1.

Questions concerning knowledge, attitude and viewpoints on communication skill in medical practice and counseling in different medical areas had the following results as listed in Table 2.

It was found that a large percentage of physicians accepted the importance of good communication skills in the medical practice, and those answered the questionnaire felt likewise agree and strongly agree with 15.7 % and 82.8 %, respectively. 41.5 % felt that the training in communication skill at the Faculty of Medicine was possibly insufficient. Other attitudes in level of

importance were that 34.7 % did not feel confident to tell patients bad news and as many as 73.8 % felt it was difficult to care for the terminally ill and dying patients. Thus, in these areas, good communication skill is needed to provide. As many as 86.2 % also found it difficult to care for, or treat, an uncooperative or non-compliance patients. Almost every physicians who responded feel that counseling is a technique they all need to master, or a total of 96.6 %, and up to 73.8 % would participate in further training on psychosocial and spiritual aspects in the treatment of the ill if it was providing the 210 questionnaires returned, the details on training workshop were discovered as listed in Table 3.

When asked about knowledge, attitude and communication skills and counseling as well as open ended questions concerning the benefits from this training workshop on counseling for the AIDS prevention and control, the following results were found as listed in Table 4.

**Table 1.** General information of physicians who answered the questionnaires.

| Participants information |                       | Total | %    |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------|------|
| Sex                      | Male                  | 117   | 55.7 |
|                          | Female                | 93    | 44.3 |
| Year graduated           | 1998                  | 28    | 13.3 |
|                          | 1999                  | 52    | 24.8 |
|                          | 2000                  | 42    | 20.0 |
|                          | 2001                  | 45    | 21.4 |
|                          | 2002                  | 43    | 20.5 |
| Work positional status   | General practitioners | 88    | 41.9 |
|                          | Scholarship practice  | 102   | 48.6 |
|                          | Residency training    | 20    | 9.5  |

**Table 2.** Knowledge, attitude and viewpoints of participants on communication skills in medical practice and counseling.

| Topic  | Strongly Agree   |      | Agree |      | Disagree |      | Strongly Disagree |     |
|--|--|------|-------|------|----------|------|-------------------|-----|
|  | No   | %    | No    | %    | No       | %    | No                | %   |
|  | 1. Good communication skills are necessary for professional medical practice. (Unanswered 1 = 0.5 %) | 174  | 82.9  | 33   | 15.7     | 2    | 1                 | -   |
| 2. Health education and counseling are the same procedure. (Unanswered 2 = 1 %)  | 70   | 33.3 | 94    | 44.8 | 4        | 19.5 | 31.4              |     |
| 3. Holistic approach of medical care is a good form of practice. (Unanswered 1 = 0.5 %)  | 141  | 67.1 | 65    | 31   | 3        | 1.4  | -                 | -   |
| 4. The teaching of communication skills from medical curriculum was sufficient for practice. (Unanswered 1 = 0.5 %)  | 19   | 9    | 103   | 49   | 81       | 38.6 | 6                 | 2.9 |
| 5. You now feel confident enough to tell bad news to your patients.(Unanswered 1 = 0.5 %)  | 22   | 10.5 | 114   | 54.3 | 70       | 33.3 | 3                 | 1.4 |
| 6. You find it difficult to care for terminally ill and dying patients. (Unanswered 2 = 1 %)   | 26   | 12.4 | 129   | 61.4 | 49       | 23.3 | 4                 | 1.9 |
| 7. All physicians should be capable of providing good counseling. (Unanswered 2 = 1 %)   | 137  | 65.2 | 66    | 31.4 | 4        | 1.9  | 1                 | 0.5 |
| 8. Building a good doctor-patient relationship is important in professional medical practice. (Unanswered 3 = 1.4 %)   | 164  | 78.1 | 41    | 19.5 | 1        | 0.5  | 1                 | 0.5 |
| 9. You find it is difficult to care the patients who are non-compliance in medical management. (Unanswered 2 = 1%)   | 43   | 20.5 | 138   | 65.7 | 24       | 11.4 | 3                 | 1.4 |
| 10. If you have the opportunity, you want to participate in more training on psychosocial and spiritual aspects in the care of patients. (Unanswered 3 = 1.4%) | 72   | 34.3 | 125   | 39.5 | 8        | 3.8  | 2                 | 1   |



**Table 3.** Details on training workshop on counseling.

| Details / Topics   | Yes |      | No  |      |
|--|-----|------|-----|------|
|  | No. | %    | No. | %    |
| 1. Have you ever participated in training workshop on counseling skills for AIDS prevention and control arranged by the Department of Psychiatry ?<br>(Unanswered 2 = 1 %) | 158 | 75.2 | 50  | 23.8 |
| 2. Have you ever provided counseling to patients on other medical problems ?   | 202 | 96.2 | 8   | 3.8  |
| 3. Have you ever provided AIDS counseling ?  | 128 | 61.4 | 82  | 38.6 |
| 4. Have you ever participated in other training for improving your communication skill and counseling technique since graduating ? (Unanswered 27= 3.3%)                   | 39  | 18.6 | 164 | 78.1 |

**Table 4.** Viewpoints associated with knowledge, attitude and communication skills the participants gained from the training. Their application in professional medical practice.

|               | No. | %    |
|---------------|-----|------|
| Benefit       | 154 | 97.4 |
| - Maximum     | 66  | 42.8 |
| - A lot       | 73  | 47.4 |
| - Some        | 14  | 8.1  |
| - Very little | 1   | 0.6  |
| No benefit    | 1   | 0.6  |
| No answer     | 3   | 1.8  |
| Total         | 158 | 100  |

Benefits the participants mentioned in the open-ended questions are as follows. (Possibly they answered more than one viewpoint.)

| Issues   | No. | %    |
|--|-----|------|
| - Gained more training in communication skills   | 145 | 91.7 |
| - Better understanding of the procedures and techniques in counseling.                     | 153 | 96.7 |
| - Developed creativity and had more friends with friends before splitting up.              | 135 | 75.3 |
| - Developed the ability to better accept the assessments made by friends in group.         | 92  | 67.2 |
| - Developed good attitude and skills on holistic approach.                                 | 73  | 46.2 |
| - Others   |     |      |
| <b>Listed: (more than one answer)</b>  |     |      |
| - Better enjoy psychiatry. Believe there are definite benefits.                            |     |      |
| - Increased confidence   |     |      |
| - Better understanding of the feelings and emotions of severe patients and their families. |     |      |
| - A quality form of study which will be retained by students in the long-term.             |     |      |

The mean scores of knowledge, attitude and viewpoints of those who answered questionnaires, from Table 2, training workshop participants on counseling techniques on AIDS prevention and control. The data are then compared with those who have not joined the training. The results are statistically compared using an independent t-test. The subjects who did

participate in the training (n=158) had a mean score of 29.76 (S.D.=2.1) Those who did not participate (n=50) had a mean score of 28.46 (S.D. = 2.3). This shows an important statistical significant difference at  $p < .01$ . The group that participated in the training had higher score than those who did not as listed in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Comparison of score of knowledge and attitude of those who participated in training and those who did not.

| Group            | Subjects | Average Points | S.D.   | S.E. of mean |
|------------------|----------|----------------|--------|--------------|
| Non-participated | 50       | 28.4600        | 2.3318 | .3298        |
| Participated     | 158      | 29.7595        | 2.0855 | .1659        |

$P < 0.01$

## Summary and Discussion

The researchers found that graduate physicians realize the importance of good communication skill. They feel this is vital to conduct a professional medical practice in addition to clinical skills. It is a tool of the development of good doctor-patient relationship, holistic approach of medical care, treatment for chronically ill patients and the final stages of terminal illness. The majority also found that training offered a number of benefits. Finally, participants who attended the training workshop gained higher scores in knowledge, attitude and skills when compared to those who did not participate in training program. This is then considered a beneficial form of training program for continuing in the future.

## Recommendations

The training module, media, package, program and follow-up of the training workshop on counseling techniques for AIDS prevention and control for final year medical students of the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University, have been developed, improved and modified by the research term during the past six years. This program has been offered to assist medical students who had already studied in psychiatry, particularly psychiatric interviews, to develop their communication and counseling skills which are very important in their professional practices. This training program could also be offered to graduate physicians as part of their continuing medical education.

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of the Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University, who provided funds for the research team to travel overseas to observe HIV/AIDS counseling in other countries. When the team started this research project, they were very fortunate to receive financial and moral support from the administration to conduct this training, and for this reason the research team is extremely thankful for him. Also, we would like to thank the National Council of Research of Thailand for this research grant. Lastly, the research team wishes to thank the academic team and all those who contributed to make this training program possible, providing and collecting important data, assessment and other assistance .

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