
Book reviews

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SINCE THE beginning of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) epidemic in 1981, a volume of books has been written on AIDS and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Many of the books have been specific to the disease process, while others have dealt with the nursing care needs of these patients. Patients with AIDS/HIV infection need much the same nursing care as other patients with serious chronic or acute illness. However, the diagnosis of AIDS/HIV infection frightens both the patient and the health care professional. Fear on the part of the nurse or health worker centers on the risk of becoming infected and the finality of the diagnosis. Because the disease is so new, much conflicting information has been presented on the actual risk to health care providers. Treatments are constantly changing, as is the total picture of the epidemic.

The two books that are discussed below

provide the nurse with current knowledge about the state of AIDS/HIV infection. The books cover much of the same content, and either would provide a sufficient reference for the nurse to both care for the patient and care for himself or herself.

A Reference Guide for Nursing Professionals, by Jacquelyn Haak Flaskerud. 1989, W.B. Saunders Company. The Curtis Center. Independence Square West, Philadelphia, PA 19186. 344 pages. \$19.95.

This book is based on the needs identified by nurses in relation to AIDS/HIV infection. The preface makes the following statement.

The content of the book is based on a national survey of nurses in which they identified: (1) their needs for information about AIDS/HIV infection, (2) the groups to which they were providing counseling education and referrals for HIV infection, and (3) the resources they used or preferred to use to gain knowledge of AIDS/HIV infection.

This book aptly meets the needs identified by the survey. The book is well docu-

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mented and contains not only the information needed to understand the disease but also the information needed to reduce fear on the part of the nurse or health care provider. The author cites several studies that indicate that the more knowledge the nurse has about AIDS, the less anxiety the nurse experiences in caring for a patient with AIDS/HIV infection.

A chapter on the sociodemographic distribution of the disease presents a clear picture of the worldwide occurrence of AIDS/HIV infection. Another chapter discusses the human immune system and how AIDS/HIV infection develops within the host. This chapter answers many questions about how the disease affects the body and why the body is unable to handle the infection.

The second section of the book presents information nurses need for caring for patients with AIDS/HIV infections both in the hospital and in the community. The chapter on nursing management of the adult client stresses the importance of health maintenance and contains many guidelines for nursing assessments, including an excellent guide for a health history. Nursing care plans are included for many of the symptoms experienced by the patient with AIDS/HIV infection. Etiology, assessment, nursing diagnosis, goals, and nursing interventions are presented for each of the symptoms discussed.

A chapter on infection control is helpful in understanding universal precautions. Specific methods are discussed for reducing occupational risk of exposure. Risk factors for HIV infection are extensively discussed in another chapter, which brings together the current information as well as the questions to be answered about the factors affecting the risk of developing the disease when exposed to the HIV virus.

In one of the final chapters, "bringing

together and giving meaning to much of the information presented in other chapters, a nurse shares her personal experience of living with and caring for a brother with AIDS."

The last chapter includes 50 pages of regional and educational AIDS resources. Included are AIDS hotlines; national resources such as the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, and state departments of health; and selected books.

Comfort in Caring—Nursing The Person With HIV Infection, by Janice Bell Meisenhelder and Christopher L. LaCharite. 1987; Scott, Foresman & Co. Glenview, Ill. 305 pages. \$22.95.

The preface states that the purpose of this book is to help nurses become comfortable with caring for patients with AIDS. This book is easy to read and effective in helping nurses understand and relate to their feelings about caring for patients with AIDS/HIV infection.

The first part of this book discusses the fear related to caring for a patient with AIDS/HIV infection, the risk of contracting AIDS and ways to protect oneself from infection. These chapters confront the issues and provide the knowledge needed to allay fears and put actual risk into perspective. The book is written in a supportive manner and includes many personal examples. The second part, related to cultural differences, covers material that is important for nurses working with AIDS/HIV infection patients. Personal examples help the reader understand the issues involved. One chapter discusses the problems and needs of communities of color in relation to the AIDS/HIV infection epidemic. Other topics include working with gay families,

addictive behavior, and women with HIV infection.

Part three covers the nursing needs of patients with AIDS. Also included is a chapter on special needs of children with AIDS/HIV infection. The last part of the book discusses different ways of caring, including empowering for self-care and nursing the spirit.

These two books present most of the issues and many of the answers in caring for patients with AIDS/HIV infection. Knowledge about the disease, how to prevent the disease, and how to reduce the risk of exposure are critical for every nurse, as we will all be touched by this modern epidemic.