

OPINION

by

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On dissertation

„INTERACTION BETWEEN THE NURSE AND FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN PROVIDING INTEGRATED CARE

By Daniela Sabeva Taseva

For awarding the educational and scientific degree of PhD

Field of higher education: Health and Sports

Professional field 7.4 Public Health

Scientific specialty Health care Management

Academic advisor Prof. Dr. Sonya Toncheva PhD, DSc

Procedure Data

Under Rector's order of Varna Medical University, № P-109-209, dated June 27, Daniela Sabeva Taseva was enrolled as a PhD student in an independent form of education for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of 'Doctor' in higher education: 7. Health and Sports, Professional field: 7.4 Public Health, Scientific specialty "Health Care Management". A protocol for a successful doctoral exam was presented. After a decision by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Public Health under Protocol P-109-116, dated March 14, 2022, regarding public defence and setting the members of the Scientific Jury, Daniela Taseva was expelled with a right to defence by a Rector's order of Varna Medical University, dated March 14, 2022.

Biographical Data and Professional Development

Daniela Sabeva Taseva graduated from the Institute for training medical professionals with specialised secondary education in Veliko Tarnovo in 1983, in Veliko Tarnovo, majoring in Child (paediatric) Nursing. After that, she began working as a nurse in the Pediatric Surgery at Dr Stefan Cherkezov Multiprofile Hospital for Active Treatment in Veliko Tarnovo. In 1988 she acquired a degree in Teacher of Practice in Medical College at the Institute for Teachers of Practice, Sliven. Later she graduated from the Master's program in Social Activities and Health Insurance Systems at St. St. Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo (1997) and from the Master's program in Health Care Management at Prof Dr P. Stoyanov Medical University of Varna (2018).

Daniela Taseva's professional development is related to university education and

began in 1983 as a senior lecturer at the Medical College with the Medical University of Pleven. During the 2009-2011 period, she held the position of Head of the Regional Centre for Foster Care at UNICEF, International Social Service, and from 2012 to 2015 he worked as a chief expert in the Directorate of Social Activities and Health at Veliko Tarnovo Municipality. From the 2012-to 2013 period, she was a part-time lecturer at the Department of Health Care at the Medical University of Pleven. After the Subsidiary of Varna Medical University opened, she was appointed a Deputy Director (2015-2019) and since 2019 she has been an Assistant professor with the Department of Health Care at the Veliko Tarnovo Subsidiary.

She participates in teams under a UNICEF project to develop a methodology for providing the service Centre for Mother and Child Health, projects Foster Care and Workshops for parents Let's grow up together. She is the coordinator of the initiatives Municipality - a friend of the child (2013-2015) and Help at home by providing the service personal assistant (2012-2015).

She has over 15 publications and over 20 participations in national and international conferences.

She is a member of the Network of Social Experts of the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Association of Health Professionals and the Veliko Tarnovo branch of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.

Descriptive characteristics of the dissertation

The dissertation, developed by Daniela Taseva, is 201 pages long, structured in compliance with the standard requirements and includes an Introduction, Literature review, Aim, Tasks, Methodology and Organisation of the Research, Results and Discussions, Providing Services to a Child at a Centre for Comprehensive Service for Children with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases, Conclusions and Recommendations. It is illustrated by 40 figures, 35 tables, 2 diagrams and 4 applications. The bibliography includes 185 sources, 121 of which are in Cyrillic and 64 in Latin.

Evaluation of Subject Relevance

Over the past decade, the challenges the global health systems have been facing are growing. Governments across the world, and in Bulgaria in particular, are looking for options to invest in solutions that enhance efficiency and cut costs by providing better care for children's health. Integrated care couples a wide range of medical and social services for people who need help with their basic daily activities resulting from a chronic disease or a disability. They are a comprehensive and coordinated set of services planned, managed and implemented for individual patients or service users by various organisations and by various professionals. In Bulgaria, care for children with chronic diseases and children with disabilities is provided by the health care system and the social assistance system. There is no established universal model for integrated care in practice. Each country implements its model, typified by the degree of integration of financial and human resources, legislation and structures of the health system, education and social activities. Child development results from complex, continuous, dynamic interactions between biological and social factors. The child's most favourable development depends on a good environment - nutrition, good health, caring and stimulating parenting. The research done to identify the interaction of the nurse with the families of

children with disabilities provides an opportunity to outline the socio-medical aspects of the nurse's professional activity and the contribution to providing integrated care.

Quality and comprehensive care, by applying scientifically-proven methods and approaches in all structures of the health system, answers the needs of children with disabilities and chronic diseases, without institutionalising the required medical and social services.

With her autonomous functions and responsibilities, the nurse actively participates in the multidisciplinary team, which guarantees the quality of the service provided. The study of the nurse's participation in the multidisciplinary team for integrated care in Daniela Taseva's dissertation is relevant, auspicious and applicable in practice and proves it has deserved a place in health care management.

Literature review

The PhD student analyses the literature by examining the nature and significance of the issue. In a logical sequence, Daniela Taseva examines the state and public policies on Early Childhood Intervention and the particulars of the family-centred approach. The essential characteristics and the development of integrated care have been presented.

The PhD student's experience and knowledge add to the correct and in-depth analysis of the forms of providing integrated health and social services for children with disabilities and their families in Bulgaria and some European countries. The legislative framework that regulates the provision of integrated care has been analysed. The need to evaluate and assess individual characteristics and apply an individual approach to improve the interaction with the families of children with disabilities and children with chronic diseases has been outlined.

The logically structured literature review reveals the PhD student's broad expertise in the field of the issue she has examined.

Methodology of Research

The main aim and tasks have been formulated and accurately indicate the research Daniela Taseva has done. The PhD student uses a wide range of methods relevant to achieving her aim. The structure and content of the set of the tools developed, comply with the specific character of the information collected by the respective group of respondents. An Algorithm for providing services for children in the Centre for Comprehensive Services for Children with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases has been developed and implemented.

Documentary and sociological survey methods have been used. Statistical methods for data analysis and interpretation have been applied to reveal the nature of the observed phenomena and their interdependencies.

The set of tools has been developed by the PhD student and includes inquiry cards to poll the opinions of specialists from social services for children with disabilities to identify the opportunities and barriers to integrated care; to poll parents' opinions on the difficulties of care and the nurse's role as part of the multidisciplinary team; to poll the opinions of graduates in Nursing on awareness of integrated care and attitudes to work with children with disabilities and their families.

A questionnaire has been developed for a standardised interview with experts on the need to develop new standards and criteria for health care following the needs of children and their families and an Algorithm for providing services to children in the Centre for Comprehensive Service for Children with Disabilities and Chronic diseases (CCSCDCD).

The conceptual apparatus presented by the author facilitates the perception of the concepts presented in the dissertation.

Results and Discussion

The dissertation presents results arranged logically and structured in Chapter Three.

The awareness of parents and specialists about the implementation of the integrated approach to the care of children with disabilities has been studied. The knowledge and skills to ensure health care, independently or in interaction with a doctor, have been analysed as a successful partnership in providing comprehensive care for mental, physical and social health. The PhD student analyses the nurse's role in the multidisciplinary team to provide integrated care. The research outlines the nurse's autonomous function in training, supporting children and their families, and making home visits.

The parents' trust in the nurse as a member of the team has been established as a result of the development of integrated services for early childhood intervention; many of them have been launched under various projects. Unfortunately, society cannot yet perceive the nurse as a professional that can make independent decisions and these decisions can only benefit the patient. Thus, the integrated-care system is deprived of crucial resources. Daniela Taseva skillfully studies the efficiency of including the nurse in the team and improving the quality of service. She establishes the nurse's contribution to improving the care of children with disabilities. The nurse's important role in supporting the specialists, conducting home visits, in the process of training and counselling, as well as in the guidance of parents for long-term care has been brought out. Sharing issues and the will to find an adequate solution helps the process of interaction in providing an integrated approach to childcare.

The results present the nurse's expertise in drawing up a care plan, case discussion, training and support. The nurse's expertise to work in integrated services has been analysed. Based on comprehensive research, has been established the need for further training and specialisation of the nurse to work in integrated services. The specific characteristics of working with children with disabilities have been brought out as well; the need for extra knowledge and skills have been established, not just in terms of care for these children, but also in knowledge of the regulations in social care. The research results outline the major prerequisites for further specialisation in Nurse for social activities. Daniela Taseva establishes an important element of integrated services - a multidisciplinary approach, teamwork and based communications between individual specialists, units and structures.

Daniela Taseva establishes an important element of integrated services - the existence of a multidisciplinary approach, teamwork and communications between individual specialists, units and structures.

The research results stress the importance of the relationship between professionals with expertise in child care and parents as a potential for implementing a family-centred approach.

The review of international practices and programs for integrated services finds out that there is no single or generally accepted conceptual model, practice or program for them. The PhD student discusses the results obtained and skillfully highlights them as deficits in practice. Based on an analysis of the current legislative framework and established clinical experience, Daniela Taseva is developing a Model of Multidisciplinary Team Care for children with disabilities at the Centre for Comprehensive Services for Children with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases. The Model proposed incorporates structures, human resources and information flows to provide integrated care for children with severe disabilities, support parents and prevent institutionalisation. The model involves both clinical aspects - early diagnosis, diagnosis, treatment, medical and psycho-social rehabilitation, and management, organisational, and information aspects.

The nurse's skills and required competence for work at a CCSCDCD have been proven. The analysis of the situation gives reasons to define the activities that the nurse can perform - providing and collecting health and social information, health promotion, rehabilitation of children with disabilities, palliative care, assistance and consultation associated with raising children with disabilities, nursing planning, and mobile activities. Based on the legislative framework the author has investigated and clinical experience, the PhD student has developed and proposed an Algorithm of action for the nurse at the Center for Comprehensive Services for Children with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases. Specific steps and interrelations have been determined that would facilitate the work of specialists in the individual units of the Centre; that will reduce the risk of mistakes and provide better awareness to parents. The research results outline the need to develop an information brochure for parents and professionals involved in the care of children with disabilities and their families. The information brochure, developed by Daniela Taseva, allows an informed choice for parents regarding the use of the services of the Center and allows the specialists to consult and refer children for diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation.

The reference to the contributions submitted in the dissertation objectively indicates Daniela Sabeva Taseva's real achievements. The contributions to the dissertation are of theoretical, practical and applied significance that I accept.

The main conclusions presented are clear and precise and characterise in detail the results yielded from the implementation of the tasks and the aim of the dissertation. This is the first time the issue of the nurse's interaction with the families of children with disabilities in providing integrated care in Bulgaria has been examined in detail.

The potential activities a nurse can perform within the structures of the Center for Comprehensive Services for Children with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases have been substantiated. The nurse's social role in the care of children with disabilities and their families has been proven and that breaks the traditional perception of her role as a provider of health care only. The nurse's necessary skills and competence to provide integrated care have been defined. Practical guidelines for streamlining the activities in the multidisciplinary team for providing integrated care have been proposed.

The formulated recommendations and contributions of the dissertation are based on the author's research data.

The language of the dissertation is good and the terminology is accurate.

In connection with the dissertation, the PhD student has submitted four full-text publications in prestigious scientific journals.

The author's abstract reproduces correctly the dissertation content.

Personal impressions

I know Daniela Taseva and I have witnessed her professional development at the Department of Health Care at the Veliko Tarnovo Subsidiary of Varna Medical University. I highly appreciate her theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Daniela Taseva is a motivated, successful and promising colleague. I value her focus, precision, intelligence, industry and the pursuit of perfection.

Conclusion

Daniela Sabeva Taseva's dissertation is of high academic and practical value, which is a contributing factor to optimising the interaction of the nurse with the families of children with disabilities in providing integrated care. Based on the overall evaluation of the documentation presented to me, I believe that Daniela Sabeva Taseva fully satisfies the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules on its implementation and the Rules on the Development of Academic Staff at Varna Medical University.

I give my positive vote for awarding Daniela Sabeva Taseva the educational and scientific degree of 'Doctor' in the Scientific specialty of Health Care Management.

May 4, 2022
Varna

Opinion written by:

Prof. Silviya Borisova, PhD, DSc

