

REVIEW

By Prof. Dr. Maria Semerdzhieva, PhD

Dean of the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University-Plovdiv

Member of the Scientific Board according to Order No. R-109-197/16.03.2023 for review of dissertation paper for award of educational and scientific degree of “Doctor”.

Occupational strand: 7.4. Public Health, doctoral program “Health Care Management”

Author: Teodora Staneva Radeva

Form of doctoral study: full-time doctoral study, Affiliate Sliven at Medical University “Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov” - city of Varna

Topic: Nursing care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity

Scientific Supervisors: Prof. Hristo Kozhuharov, PhD.

Prof. Elena Zheleva, PhD.

PRESENTATION OF THE PROCEDURE AND THE DOCTORAL STUDENT

The set of materials presented in electronic and paper form is in compliance with the requirements for award of educational and scientific degree of “Doctor” according to the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at Medical University - Varna.

The presented package of administrative documents has been prepared precisely and carefully.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE DOCTORAL STUDENT

Doctoral student Teodora Radeva graduated from Shumen Medical College as a nurse. In 2001, she obtained Bachelor’s degree in Social Pedagogy at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen. In 2010 she completed a Master’s degree program in Health Care Management. She specialized in “Psychiatric Health Care” (2020 - 2021) at Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna. After successfully

passing a competition, she was enrolled in 2020 as a full-time doctoral student at MU-Varna.

T. Radeva's first workplace was the institution for seniors with mental disorders in the village of Cherni Vrah where she worked as a nurse. From 2007 to 2016, she successively held the position of Senior Nurse in the First and Second Psychiatric Clinics. Since 2019 she has been working as a Senior Nurse in the Second Psychiatric Clinic at University General Hospital "Sveta Marina" EAD.

She participated in the Student Practice - Phase 1 Project of the Ministry of Education and Culture as a mentor for a training organization of University General Hospital "Sveta Marina" EAD - Varna. She is a member of the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association and the Bulgarian Scientific Society for Public Health

A number of pieces of evidence of participation in clinical trials were described and submitted. She is the chairperson of the PD of the Bulgarian Association of Healthcare Professionals at University General Hospital Sveta Marina EAD. She is a member of the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association and the Bulgarian Scientific Society for Public Health.

She is fluent in English language - level B2 and in Russian language - level C. She has very good computer skills.

RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

The use of alcohol and other narcotic substances has significant negative social and health repercussions. The use of these substances can cause a number of somatic problems in the field of mental health such as addictions, difficulty learning and remembering information, and can trigger a number of psychological problems – aggression, depression, anxiety, suicide, etc.

Medical staff face a range of challenges when providing care to clients with psychiatric co-morbidities, for example the staff have to deal with physical and verbal aggression, extreme agitation, episodes of acute psychosis and mental confusion.

This requires medical specialists who work with such patients to possess, in addition to very good professional training, a number of additional skills such as leadership, initiative, pedagogical skills, emotional stability. Working with such patients involves crisis management, identification of mental changes and utilization of specific communication techniques.

The dissertation submitted to me for review is dedicated to studying, on the one hand, the organization of health care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity, and on the other hand, the knowledge, skills and attitudes of psychiatric nurses to work with such patients. The lack of research on nursing care for people with psychiatric co-morbidities prompted the development of this dissertation.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The presented paper is elaborated entirely on the basis of own research and meets the requirements for a dissertation for award of educational and scientific degree of "Doctor". It has 126 pages, illustrated with 58 tables and 15 figures. It is structurally divided into four main chapters, preceded by an introduction. The scientific paper ends with a description of the literature used and 7 appendices.

The title of the paper accurately and completely reflects the discussed issues. The table of contents is complete, informative and reflects the structure of the presented paper. The introduction presents the subject of the dissertation and outlines the framework of the problems demonstrating to the relevance of the discussed subject.

The literature overview, consisting of 33 pages, fully covers the issues of the dissertation. The development of psychiatry as a science and the role of nurses in the organization and activity of psychiatric care in Bulgaria are examined from a historical point of view. The essence and meaning of the concepts of addiction and psychiatric comorbidity are presented, and the two conditions are described in various mental disorders. A special place is devoted to the specific characteristics of psychiatric health care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity. 187 titles were used, of which 40 are in Cyrillic, 129 in Latin, as well as 18 Internet sources. Both the most up-to-date sources (80 sources are from the period 2012 - 2022) and some key documents from previous years have been studied, which makes it possible to trace the course of changes and their expediency. Doctoral student T. Radeva shows good knowledge in the researched area. This is proven by the wide-ranging and well-structured literature review on the various aspects of the problem and by the content of the attached bibliography.

The presented data is subjected to the general direction of the academic paper and is accompanied by conclusions and generalizations thus enabling a transition to the empirical part.

The goal, tasks, materials and methods are described on 8 pages. The goal is clearly formulated and scientifically supported. Six tasks have been formulated for the fulfilment of the goal and cover the subject of the dissertation and correctly reflect the problems highlighted in the overview.

The "Materials and methods" section correctly and accurately presents the resources, methods and studies used. 294 persons were surveyed in the course of the study, distributed as follows:

- Nurses - 44
- Multidisciplinary clinical team -14
- Patients with psychiatric comorbidity - 68
- Codependents – members of the patient's family - 68
- 3rd and 4th year nursing students and 4th year midwifery students - 100
- Patients with relapse within 1 to 3 months after discharge – 38

The inclusion and exclusion criteria are defined, which is decisive for the design of such research.

The study was conducted in the Psychiatric Clinics University General Hospital "Sveta Marina" EAD Varna, as well as at MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" and all of its affiliates – in the cities of Varna, Shumen, Veliko Tarnovo and Sliven.

Two complementary methods were used in order to solve the tasks set:

- documentary method – examination of regulations, scientific publications, reports;
- survey method – for the purposes of the survey, six survey cards were elaborated to examine the opinion of the different logical units. A self-assessment questionnaire for co-dependency developed by V.V. Tkacheva was also used, consisting of 16 questions, applied to relatives and cohabitants of dependent patients with mental comorbidity.

The obtained experimental results are presented in a separate section "**Results and discussion**" on 34 pages. The exposition of the results and discussion follows the tasks set in the dissertation. The illustration material added to the results after the statistical processing of the collected data made a good impression. The results of the study are interpreted correctly however they lack depth

of analysis and a thorough comparison with other similar studies. It is a good practice to summarize the results after each section.

The general **conclusions** made correspond to and accurately reflect the obtained results, but they are presented in too much detail, and this makes impossible to highlight the main patterns derived from the study.

I believe that the recommendations made to the Bulgarian Association of Healthcare Professionals, the Medical Universities and the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association are relevant and necessary. These recommendations are a direct consequence of the results obtained in the process of the tasks solved by the doctoral student and are a practically feasible solution to the goal set in the dissertation.

T. Radeva presents seven **contributions** in her work. In my opinion they are well-founded and justified. The most significant should be mentioned below:

1. The need to invest in the training of nurses to care for people with psychiatric comorbidity has been identified and the club "Introduction to Psychiatric Nursing" for nursing students was created and it functions.
2. A substantiated proposal was made to set up a psychiatric nursing practice to support dependent patients with mental comorbidity.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The abstract has a volume of 44 pages and follows the structure of the dissertation, presenting succinctly the obtained results and the contributions made with the dissertation.

Publications related to the subject of the dissertation

Doctoral student Radeva presents a list of two independent publications in compendiums of national conferences and one participation in a scientific forum. It can be assumed that the results of the dissertation have become available to the scientific community. All publications are related to the topics considered in the dissertation and present the results achieved in different stages of the development of the academic paper.

CONCLUSION

The presented dissertation, as a formulation of the problems, such as scope, goal, tasks, study methodology and achieved results in the specific field meets the requirements for independent scientific research and all of the conditions of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its Implementing Regulations. All of this allows me to propose to the respected scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" to Teodora Staneva Radeva in the doctoral program of "Health Care Management", occupational strand 7.4. Public Health.

20. 04. 2023

Plovdiv

Review prepared by:

(Prof. Dr. Maria Semerdzhieva, PhD) /