

REVIEW

by

Prof. Biyanka Lyubchova Tornyova, PhD
Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Public Health,
Medical University – Plovdiv
of dissertation

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 studies: full-time

Department: “Health Care” of Affiliate Sliven at MU “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” - city of Varna

Topic: Nursing care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity

Scientific Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Hristo Kozhuharov, PhD, and Prof. Elena Zheleva, PhD

The review was prepared on the basis of Order № R-109-197/16.03.2023 of the Rector of MU “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” - Varna to determine the members of the scientific board for the procedure.

1. Presentation of the procedure and the doctoral student

Teodora Staneva Radeva is enrolled in full-time doctoral studies at the “Health Care” Department of Affiliate Sliven at MU “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” - city of Varna with Order No. R-109-33/31.01.2020 of the Rector of MU-Varna. In implementation of Rector’s Order No. R-109-461/03.11.2021, she successfully passed the exam for the PhD degree on 11.12.2021. On the basis of the decision of the Academic Council she was dismissed from the program with right of defence by Order No. R-109-197/16.03.2023.

The submitted set of materials on paper and electronic media, related to and proving the procedural validity of the procedure, have been prepared diligently and thoroughly. These materials fully comply with the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its Implementing Regulations, as well as with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at Medical University - Varna.

The set of materials includes the following documents:

- an application to the Rector of MU-Varna;
- a curriculum vitae;
- a copy of diplomas for a completed OCS "master's" and a recognized specialty;
- an enrollment order;
- a dismissal order with right of defence;
- a report of fulfilled minimum requirements for the PhD degree;

- a statement of assurance;
- a declaration of originality;
- proof of registration of an academic profile with Google Scholar;
- a list and copies of the publications related to the topic of the dissertation.

2. Brief biographical details of the doctoral student

Teodora Staneva Radeva graduated with a specialist degree and professional qualification in nursing from the Medical College – Shumen in 1998.

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 at Medical University – Varna.

She began her professional career in 1999 as a nurse in the institution for seniors with mental disorders in the village of Cherni Vrah, where she worked until 2007. From 2007 to 2015 she worked as a senior nurse in the First Psychiatric Clinic in the ward for male adults, and from 2015 until 2016 in the ward for female adults of the Second Psychiatric Clinic. From 2019 until now she has been working at the position of senior nurse in the Second Psychiatric Clinic at University General Hospital "Sveta Marina" EAD - Varna.

Doctoral student Teodora Radeva works to improve her professional competence and constantly upgrades her knowledge and skills. Proof of this is the acquisition of a specialty in "Psychiatric Health Care" at MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna in 2020 and her active participation in clinical studies.

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.

In addition to her mother tongue, she is fluent in Russian (level C) and English (level B2).

3. Relevance of the dissertation's topic

The presented dissertation is dedicated to a significant problem in modern health care, related to the optimization of nursing care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity who pose challenges for psychiatric nursing.

Mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness, but emotional well-being, a quality of perception of life and a way of life. Good mental health is the foundation for a fulfilling and productive life. Its importance is growing on a global scale. Mental health issues have medical, social and financial dimensions. Patients with addictions are at a greater risk of mental disorders than the rest of the population. They need treatment, care, and stabilization for not one, but at least two disorders that are interrelated. Interdisciplinary psychiatric nursing care for these patients is of key importance, and this proves the importance of the developed dissertation.

The conducted research is a basis for the improvement of nursing care and a reassessment of the role of psychiatric nurses, which is still not clearly defined, although there are specialized trainings and programs for psychiatric nurses.

4. General description and characteristics of the dissertation

The dissertation is laid out on 126 standard pages and illustrated with 15 figures, 58 tables and 7 appendices. Structurally, the dissertation is composed of an introduction, four chapters, including conclusions, recommendations, contributions, bibliography and appendices.

The introduction justifies the relevance of the topic and outlines the issues that will be analysed.

The literature review /First chapter, pages 8-40/ is logically structured and reflects the scientific research and professional experience of the doctoral student. This chapter provides a purposeful and comprehensive review of the history of psychiatry and the attitudes to mental health from ancient times to the present day. The organization of psychiatric care in Bulgaria and in some European countries, as well as the role and functions of nurses in protecting mental health has been subjected to a thorough and comprehensive theoretical analysis. An outline is made of the main problems and trends in order to improve the quality and efficiency of psychiatric health care.

The essence and meaning of the concepts of “addiction” and “mental comorbidity” and their dimensions in various mental disorders are analysed in detail. The second emphasis of the theoretical study is placed on the nursing process in psychiatric health care and the specific characteristics of psychiatric health care for dependent patients with mental comorbidity. The professional behaviour, skills and competencies of the psychiatric nurse are discussed from analytical point of view, as well as the ethical and legal aspects of psychiatric health care. A third emphasis is placed on the current legislation for dependent patients with mental comorbidity. The literature review ends with a summary that confirms the relevance and significance of the dissertation.

Teodora Radeva has researched authoritative sources related to the discussed issue. They are quoted objectively and correctly. Her theoretical reasoning is the result of a study of 187 literary sources, 40 of which in Cyrillic alphabet, 129 in Latin alphabet and 18 internet resources, and half of these sources are from the last 10 years.

The second chapter of the dissertation “Aim, tasks, materials and methods” /pages 41-49/ is dedicated to the design and methodology of the study. The experimental program of the doctoral student is developed in a logical aspect subordinated to the theoretical study. The purpose, tasks, working hypotheses, subject and object of study as well as the organization of the study are presented.

The purpose of the work is to study and analyse the organization of psychiatric health care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity in hospital and non-hospital environments and to determine the possibilities for its optimization.

Six tasks have been formulated for the fulfilment of the goal that has been set. These tasks correspond to the goal and cover all aspects of the dissertation.

In terms of the methodology of the study, doctoral student Teodora Radeva has combined several basic methods of research relevant to the goals and tasks to be solved - documentary, survey and mathematical-statistical methods. The stages and timing of the

study are described in detail. The mathematical and statistical methods for processing and analysing the collected data are correctly presented.

Survey questionnaires for six groups of respondents and a self-assessment questionnaire on co-dependency by (V. Tkacheva), applied to relatives and cohabitants of dependent patients with mental comorbidity, are attached.

A self-study was conducted covering a total of 294 respondents, distributed as follows: 44 nurses and 14 members of a multidisciplinary team in psychiatric clinics; dependent patients with mental comorbidity - 68; co-dependents - relatives from a patient's family - 68; 3rd and 4th year nursing students and 4th year midwifery students from all affiliates of MU - Varna - 100; patients with a relapse within 1 to 3 months after dehospitalization - 38.

The collected information is sufficient in volume to obtain reliable results. The selected methodology of the study allows for the goal to be achieved and to reach an adequate solution to the tasks solved in the dissertation.

The third chapter is dedicated to the results and their discussion and includes 32 pages. This forms the core of the dissertation and presents the results of the conducted research. An objective account of the opinions of the respondents participating in the study is made in parallel with the presentation of the results of the experimental program, but these need deeper interpretation to better unfold their multi-faceted quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The illustration of the results after the statistical processing of the collected data makes a good impression. This makes the analysis and interpretation of the results more accessible and comparable to similar studies.

The fourth chapter includes conclusions, recommendations and contributions. The dissertation ends with the formulation of **conclusions**, which stem naturally from the study, the obtained results and their interpretation. The most important conclusion is that there is an imbalance between the individual professionals in the institutions providing psychiatric care – nurses, doctors, psychologists, social workers who form multidisciplinary teams necessary for quality health care. Psychiatric institutions are an unattractive place for nurses to work because of poor working conditions, low pay and high emotional stress. The aging of the medical staff in psychiatric wards is also a problem.

This necessitates more efforts to attract young staff to psychiatric facilities and to motivate them.

5. Contributions and significance of the work for science and practice.

The contributions formulated by doctoral student Radeva are objectively derived /within the relationship between goal and tasks of the research - hypotheses - conducted study - results/ and defended in the context of the analysis of the conducted study.

The contributions are both theoretical and practical in nature. The most important of them are:

- The current organization of psychiatric care in Bulgaria was studied in-depth and the main problems and trends for the development of psychiatric nursing care were identified.

- The club "Introduction to Psychiatric Nursing" for nursing students was created and its functions.

- The specifics of nursing care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity were studied and the priorities for the development and improvement of nursing care were identified.

- The need to create a psychiatric nursing practice to support dependent patients with mental comorbidity is substantiated.

The recommendations made at the end of the dissertation are relevant and timely.

6. Publications on the subject of the dissertation

Two full-text publications related to the dissertation and one participation in a scientific forum are presented. Doctoral student Radeva is the sole author of the publications. They reflect the essence of the study made under the dissertation.

7. Abstract

The content and quality of the abstract to the dissertation /consisting of 44 pages/ follow the structure and reflect the goals, tasks, methods used, the results achieved, the conclusions and scientific contributions of the dissertation. My conclusion is that the abstract meets all standard requirements for a synthesized and adequate presentation of the primary document, the scientific text, as well as for an objective reflection of the content of the dissertation research. The scientific and technical requirements of the relevant national and internal regulations for the content of the abstract are met.

I have no **critical remarks and recommendations** to the conducted study and the set of materials.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation shows that Teodora Radeva has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific speciality of "Health Care Management" and abilities and skills to conduct independently a scientific study.

The merits and qualities of the dissertation highlighted in the review allow me to give my positive vote and to propose to the respected members of the Scientific Board to award the educational and scientific degree of "**Doctor**" to **Teodora Staneva Radeva in the scientific speciality of "Health Care Management"** in the field of higher education 7. Health Care and Sports, occupational strand 7.4 Public Health.

20.04. 2023

Plovdiv

Review prepared by:

/Prof. Biyanka Tornyova, PhD/