

## REVIEW

By Prof. Elena Grozeva Zheleva, PhD  
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"Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna  
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Appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury by Order No. R-109-52 of 02/15/2024. of the Rector of MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - city of Varna, and on the basis of Protocol No. 1/26.02.2024 to prepare a review on the procedure for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" with candidate: Petya Georgieva Krumova, affiliate - Sliven of the University of Varna.

**Subject:** Awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Higher education area: 7. Healthcare and Sport, professional field 7.4. Public health and scientific specialty: Health care management.

**On the topic:** „Ethical aspects of the health care provided by nurses to elderly and old people“

Scientific supervisors: **Assoc. Prof. Emiliya Georgieva, PhD**  
**Assoc. Prof. Veselina Slavova, PhD**

All the necessary documents provided for in the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations to it and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Medical University-Varna have been submitted.

The thesis proposed for defense by lecturer Petya Georgieva Krumova is the result of her long-term, purposeful work as a health care specialist, teacher and researcher. In 2000, at the Medical College of Trakia University - Stara Zagora, she graduated with the degree of "Specialist" in the specialty "Nurse" and received the professional qualification "Nurse". She graduated in 2006 with the educational qualification "Bachelor" in the specialty "Health Care" at the Faculty of Medicine of the Medical Institute of the city of Plovdiv, with the professional qualification "Head of Health Care" and "Lecturer in a Medical College". In 2009, she obtained a Master's degree at the National World Economy University - Sofia, majoring in "Economics of Defense and Security". And in 2014 – Master's degree at the Medical University of Sofia, Faculty of public health with specialty "Health care management" and professional qualification "Health care manager and teacher in practice".

From 2000 to 2008, she worked on a basic employment contract as an operating room nurse at University Multidisciplinary Hospital for Active Treatment (UMHAT) EAD – Stara Zagora. In the period 2008-2014 Petya Krumova works at UMHAT "Prof. Dr. Stoyan Kirkovich" Stara Zagora as Senior nurse in Operating room. And since 2014 – 2018 as a lecturer in health care at the Medical College at Trakia University Stara Zagora. From 2018 until 2021 she worked as a Senior Nurse in operating room at Trakia Hospital Ltd - Stara Zagora and for the same period as a part-time lecturer in Health Care at the Medical College of Trakia University - Stara Zagora. Since October 2021 she has been a lecturer in Health care at the Medical College - Stara Zagora of Trakia University.

**Petya Krumova** is an established teacher with high professional competences in the field of health care, clinical practice and pre-graduate internship.

She holds 20 postgraduate certificates.



The dissertation work of **Petya Georgieva Krumova** is dedicated to a significant problem related to the ethical aspects of health care provided by nurses for the elderly and old people.

The paper presents the challenges before health care professionals to provide affordable, quality and sustainable services, for long-term care for the elderly, with the aim of improving their quality of life and their fuller inclusion in public life. Additionally, attention was paid to the lack of institutional policy and adequate measures to meet the needs of society and the existing demographic trends leading to significant changes in society.

The created survey instrumentation is suitable for the purposeful research conducted to present aging as a global problem. Aging is associated with a number of health problems and rising health care costs. All this requires implementation of necessary measures to conduct an adequate health policy regarding the provision of health care for the elderly.

The dissertation contains 146 pages, illustration of 52 figures, 11 tables and contains 3 appendices. The bibliographic list contains 173 literary sources, of which 56 in Cyrillic and 117 in Latin, of which 12 are from the WEB site.

The work is structured according to the requirements and includes: **introduction**; first chapter "**Literary review**" with seven paragraphs; second chapter "**Aim, tasks, methodology and organization of the study**" with five paragraphs; third chapter "**Results of public surveys**" with four paragraphs; chapter four "**A model for implementing ethical nursing care in a nursing home**" with two paragraphs; **conclusion; opinions; suggestions; contributions; bibliography and appendices**. The content corresponds to the topic and reflects the results of the research done by lecturer Petya Krumova.

The **Introduction** presents the scientific and practical significance of the researched problem - ethical aspects of health care provided by nurses for the elderly and old people. The relevance of the dissertation study is that the transformation of the elderly patient from an object of health care into an active subject who is able to actively participate in the process of determining their care and make informed decisions about their health. This includes respectful attitude to their values, rights and autonomy, as well as supporting them to express their opinion and their inclusion in the process of planning and implementing health care. Nurses have been found to play a key role in providing care for these patients. Another serious problem related to the shortage of medical specialists in the field of health care and health care in general has been outlined. Emphasis is placed on the ethical aspects of health care for the elderly. The main ethical challenges faced by nurses are related to the autonomy of patients, justice in the provision of services, respect for the dignity and quality of life, and the use of available resources.

In the first chapter "**Literature review**", the PhD student presents the relevance of the researched problem. She makes a theoretical analysis of the ethics of care in nursing and of the elderly and old people as objects of care. There is a focus on the problem of the demographic situation of the population in Bulgaria. She examines the peculiarities of the legal documents regulating and protecting the rights of the elderly and old people and emphasizes the comparative analysis of ethical codes in nursing. The PhD student considers in detail the ethical standards established and applied in the care of the elderly and old people. She pays attention to socializing with them and examines communication patterns. She also analyzes motivation and attitude demonstrated by nursing students in working with the elderly.

Lecturer Petya Krumova provides information about health care provided to the elderly as a specific type of service affecting society, both in the past and in the present. She summarizes and draws conclusions from the literature review, so that the ethical aspects of health care for the elderly and old people by health care professionals have not yet been



researched, analyzed and evaluated. The dissertation work examines the overall organization and realization of the relevance of the problem. It analyzes and supports the current situation where health care professionals are faced with serious challenges related to the aging population worldwide. It emphasizes the growing need for care for the elderly and old people, besides the limited human resources.

The PhD student also looks at the issues of the general organization and implementation of this type of service. Special attention is paid to the need to adapt health services to demographic changes, with an emphasis on training more specialists in the field of geriatrics, reducing institutionalism and stimulating the creation of alternative forms of ambulatory and home care for the elderly.

In the dissertation, the author presents the challenge that positive health outcomes are influenced by good communication between patients and nurses. This communication increases the self-esteem and job satisfaction of the nurse and motivates patients to have a positive attitude towards protecting their own health. The dissertation offers continuous updating of the care system for the elderly in Bulgaria. Emphasis is made that it still needs improvements and further investment, especially in rural and remote areas, as well as in smaller towns.

The literary sources used show the awareness of the author on the researched problem.

The doctoral student summarizes that the quality of care for the elderly in Bulgaria can vary depending on the region and available resources. Inadequate funding and lack of access to quality care are still serious challenges that need to be addressed. A health care failure today can be a costly problem tomorrow.

**Petya Krumova** considers the elderly as a vulnerable group of the population that requires support and special health care. She defends her own position on the main ethical challenges facing nurses in providing care to this patient group. They are related to respect for patients' autonomy, fairness in service delivery, respect for dignity and quality of life, and the use of resources.

In the **second chapter "Aim, tasks, methodology and organization of the study"** the aim, tasks and research hypotheses /three/ of the study are formulated.

It presents the **subject and object of the study and the volume of the research**. The organization, stages of the research and applied methods, criteria for inclusion and exclusion in the research, as well as respective indicators are outlined. The following research methods are used: **documentary method, sociological method, descriptive and statistical methods**. **Data analysis and interpretation** methods are used for the statistical presentation of the results in order to reveal the essence of the observed phenomena and their interdependencies. **Descriptive and estimation methods** /descriptive statistics for quantitative variables; frequency analysis of qualitative variables and graphic images/; **Hypothesis testing methods** /Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test to check the normality of the distribution of the given sample; Chi-square for agreement, Chi-square test of independence and Fisher's exact test for mutual influence between qualitative variables, Student's t-test for comparison of means between quantitative variables between different measurements, Correlation analysis to establish the relationship between the investigated quantitative and qualitative variables/.

**Statistical analysis** is performed using IBM Statistics v. 20 for WINDOWS. The obtained results are evaluated as statistically significant when the p-value (p-value) <0.05, in which case the null hypothesis is rejected.

The data are graphically displayed through tables, bar and pie charts implemented in MS Excel.

**Survey Instrumentation** shows that the PhD student uses self-developed tools. **Three individual questionnaires** with closed and open questions were developed to survey



the opinion of health professionals working with the elderly; elderly and old people receiving health care and students of the III<sup>rd</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> year specialty "nurse".

For the purposes of the experiment, the PhD student developed and implemented an author's "**Model for introducing ethical nursing care in a nursing home**", which was developed specifically for institutions caring for the elderly for the benefit of nurses, managers of institutions and users of this type of service - the elderly and their relatives. The created model for nursing care is based on ethical norms of behavior and respect for human rights. The model aims respect for autonomy, cooperation and support, comprehensive care, improvement of the quality of life of the elderly and old people. All of this includes providing emotional support, social connections and activities to support the spiritual and psychological needs of older people. It is necessary to create conditions for self-realization and participation in the community, where old people can feel valued and useful.

The study was conducted in 4 main stages after an accurate selection of the means, time and venue: 1st stage / Study of the actuality of the problem and formulation of the main goal, tasks, working hypotheses and selection of an appropriate method and means of research/ April - August 2022; II stage /Preparation of the study/ August 2022 - January 2023; III stage /Conducting the survey/ February - April 2023; 4th stage Development, analysis and summary of the received data. The final design and issue of the dissertation – May - August 2023, after approval by the Committee on Ethics of Scientific Research (CESR) at Varna Medical University with Decision No. 123/15.12.2022.

**The organization** of the study includes: preparatory stage and actual study. Informed consent for participation in the study was prepared, as each study participant was provided with information describing the entire study outcome, benefits to the study participant, and the credibility of the information.

The presented information about the conceptual approach used contributes to a more complete and accurate clarification of the concepts.

In the **third chapter, "Results of our own research"**, the opinion of nurses working in institutions caring for the elderly, the opinion of the elderly and old people living in these institutions themselves, as well as the opinion of future nurses in the form of students from third and fourth year majoring in "Nursing". The opinion of the respondents regarding the quality and organization of health care for the elderly and old people in the Stara Zagora region from the point of view of "producers" and "users" of this specific type of service was investigated. The real state of the problem in practice is revealed, the results obtained from the conducted research are provided. The results of the PhD student's own research and discussion stand out. The study included 303 respondents, divided into three groups - practicing nurses in institutions providing health care for the elderly in the Stara Zagora region /n = 55/; persons over the age of 65, accommodated in these institutions /n = 100/; third- and fourth- year students, majoring in "Nursing", studying at the Sliven affiliate of the Medical University-Varna, Tracia University, Stara Zagora and its Haskovo Affiliate./n = 148/.

An in-depth analysis of the views of the participants in the conducted research was made. The reluctance of specialists who are just starting their professional careers to carry out professional activities related to caring for the elderly and old people has been proven, as well as the fact that medical specialists of active age are engaged in work in other areas of the nursing profession, which is higher paid and with more opportunities for professional development and realization.



The PhD student proves that the nurses surveyed in the study need more in-depth theoretical and practical training in the course of their professional development related to the provision of specialized health care for the elderly.

**Petya Krumova** found that the training of nurses to provide health care for the elderly **should be more thorough**. It is necessary to include more up-to-date topics related to the specifics of adulthood, as well as the formation of new knowledge, skills and competencies in them during their studies. An important trend should be that any recommendation to health care professionals be related to the provision of highly specialized and quality health care for the elderly. Summarizing the results of the conducted research, the PhD student analyzes the need to provide professional and quality care for the elderly and old people in an institutional **environment through communication skills; ability to respect and honor the personality** of the elderly and old people; **the ability to provide specialized health care and the ability to behave ethically**, in accordance with ethical norms and rules, as well as with generally valid principles of life. The PhD student presents **problematic communication** in the routine daily activity of medical professionals as an interaction between the elderly and the medical professional. She considers that problematic communication is a reason to believe that it is **necessary for nurses to develop skills through which they can improve their communication with the elderly and old people**, thus guaranteeing a better quality of health care. She summarizes that medical professionals who care for the elderly and old people often face ethical cases related to them and it is necessary to optimize approach to solve the ethical problems. **The respondents** say that they do not find **enough time for each patient**. **The care** that is given to the elderly, accommodated in the relevant institution or unit, is insufficient in terms of volume and not always carried out in compliance with all established standards of good medical practice.

Lecturer Petya Krumova has made an in-depth analysis of the views of nurses regarding the main difficulties they encounter when providing health care for the elderly in an institutional environment. She analyzes five main types of difficulties: **insufficient knowledge and skills for caring for the elderly; insufficient number of personnel; lack of modern facilities; features of the psycho-social climate in the medical team and the disturbed relationship between the nurse and the patient**.

The PhD student proves that the main difficulty in providing care for the elderly and old people by nurses is **the insufficient number of staff and the insufficiently good facility (material and technical base)** in which the care is provided.

Lecturer Petya Krumova analyzes the data obtained from the conducted survey among those familiar with the code of ethics **health care professionals** who care for the elderly, to what extent they know the code of ethics of health care professionals. She gives importance to the fact that there are those **who are not familiar with this document** or are familiar with **it to a small extent**, which is a prerequisite for the PhD student to conclude that the ethical rules of the profession are not respected in their entire volume and intent, as they are set out in the Code.

Analyzing the data from the second group of respondents, the PhD student convincingly shows that for almost all of those placed in this type of long-term care institution, **the decision to place them was made by their relatives**, without having discussed it with the elderly person. Examining the satisfaction of the elderly and old people housed in a specialized institution, teacher Petya Krumova emphasizes on the **living conditions; sanitary and hygienic conditions; conditions facilitating movement; the opportunities for full communication and the quality of the food provided**. It found that to the greatest extent the elderly are satisfied with the opportunity to communicate with other people, as well as with the conditions supporting their movement by providing a special



environment. She also shares the low degree of satisfaction with the quality and variety of the food offered; living conditions and sanitary and hygienic conditions.

The PhD student summarizes the opinion of the respondents that the leading factors in the provided institutional services are: **medication administration; assistance in maintaining personal hygiene; assistance with dressing and undressing; opportunities to walk outside; quality and quantity of food offered; stimulation of physical activity; mental health care and opportunity for other entertainment of choice.**

PhD student Krumova proves that the organization of nurses' work has a key role in the provision of health care. Their professionalism and work is highly appreciated by health care users, who express their gratitude for the quality of care provided. They **trust the nurses and** follow their recommendations; respect and honor their profession and feel **gratitude** for nursing care.

An in-depth analysis was made of the views of teacher Petya Krumova, that in the institutions caring for the elderly, mainly people over 70 years of age are accommodated, in which two or more diseases are often found, most often of the cardiovascular system and other chronic illnesses. The comorbidity of the elderly must be taken into account when offering each of the services in order to provide maximum care. In the event of a conflict with another resident or with the institution's staff, the elderly prefer to turn to their relatives for assistance. This emphasizes the importance of support and help from the relatives of the elderly and old people. The PhD student demonstrates the need to improve communication and interaction with team members in institutions to facilitate help-seeking and conflict resolution.

Petya Krumova proves that quality communication, trust and interaction between the elderly and nurses within institutions can improve the quality of care and create a positive environment for the elderly.

An in-depth analysis of students' views on the provision of health care for the elderly and old people has been carried out. Respondents shared the difficult task, requiring specific knowledge, skills and competencies. Doctoral student Petya Krumova analyzes the factors that have an impact on students' motivation to work with elderly people: **opportunity for professional growth; use of additional paid annual leave; obtaining more complete professional training and changing the stereotype of caring for the elderly in Bulgaria.** The PhD student proves the students' need for additional training on the problem under consideration.

Lecturer Petya Krumova analyzes the data indicated by the conducted survey among future health care specialists about their unattractive work with the elderly. They are convinced that during their studies at the university they should focus on: **training in special nursing care for the chronically ill and their families; study of characteristic psychopathological changes in old people; the age specifics of the manifestation of diseases; age-related changes in psyche and behavior; appropriate communication approaches; regulatory requirements and European standards for the quality of care for the elderly; prevention and prophylaxis of aging.**

According to the respondents, it is necessary to attract more students and young professionals in the field of health care for the elderly. The lack of interest or preference to work in the field of health care for the elderly among students reflects various factors, such as lack of information, prejudice, preferences to work in other areas of medical practice.

It has been demonstrated that there is a need to improve education and training in health care for the elderly, through the development and implementation of new programs, to prepare students to work with the aging population and the specific needs of this group. Future nurses express a preference to take care of their loved ones themselves, instead of



placing them in an institution offering care for the elderly, which is associated with their responsibility to the family.

The statistical processing presented by lecturer **Petya Krumova** shows that the obtained result gives her reason to believe that the two groups of respondents have similar perceptions of the quality of care provided to the elderly.

Theoretical, mathematical and statistical processing of the empirical data is presented, as well as their interpretation in the dissertation work.

In the fourth chapter, "**A Model for introducing ethical nursing care in a nursing home**" is aimed at increasing the quality of health care, the satisfaction of the person with the work, the satisfaction of the users of these services in the face of the elderly individuals and their relatives, as well as the possibility for managers to receive feedback on the quality of services offered.

The PhD student proposes the preparation of an "**Ethical Nursing Care Plan in a Nursing Home**" from the moment the individual enters the institution; welcoming the person in need of care and his relatives; providing an opportunity to become familiar with the Rules of Procedure and the information on the services and procedures offered; familiarization with the rights, responsibilities and obligations during the stay at the institution; ongoing monitoring and care tailored to the individual's specific medical and psychological needs.

**Petya Krumova**, based on the analysis, develops and approves for application: Questionnaire about the preferences and interests of the person who will be accommodated in a Home for elderly and Questionnaire about the health status of the person being accommodated, filled out by his relatives.

Putting into practice a model of ethical nursing care in a nursing home can have many and varied benefits both for the elderly, as well as for the staff and the institution as a whole: **better quality of care; individuality of care; better coordination of health services; ensuring the safety of the elderly; improvement of the working environment and increase of staff satisfaction; high efficiency and resource optimization; improved communication; building trust and respect; improved education; increased motivation.**

The significance of the transformative study is that the "**Model for introducing ethical nursing care in a Nursing Home**" developed and proposed by PhD student Petya Krumova is tested in the conditions of a real environment.

In the conclusion, lecturer Petya Georgieva Krumova analyzes the ethical aspects of health care provided by nurses for the elderly as fundamental for ensuring competent and quality care, demonstrating empathy and respect in accordance with high ethical standards. Ethical aspects of health care concern both patients and nurses. Elderly care is the responsibility of the entire health care system and the society as a whole.

The dissertation provides information on the ethical aspects of health care provided by nurses to the elderly and old people.

The results of the study confirm the hypotheses.

**The conclusions** refer to the opinion of Petya Krumova about the researched problems in the dissertation work.

**The suggestions** made will help to implement the **ethical aspects of health care provided by nurses for the elderly and old people.**

The **theoretical and cognitive contributions** of the work are:

- A comparative analysis of Bulgarian and foreign literary sources, legal documents related to the ethical aspects of health care provided by nurses for the elderly was carried out.
- Good practices on the ethical aspects of health care for the elderly in different countries were presented.

- An analysis of the care for elderly and old people housed in institutions in the territory of Stara Zagora region was carried out.
  - The main reasons for entering an institution and using the services in a Home for the elderly were indicated.
- And the contributions of **a practical-applied nature are:**
- A model has been developed for the introduction of ethical nursing care for persons housed in institutions providing care for the elderly and old people, tailored to their individual needs.
  - Questionnaires have been presented to assess the individual needs and health status of old people in a Home for the elderly in order to adequately plan for their care.
  - Proposals have been formulated for the responsible institutions to conduct a postgraduate training on the current problems of geriatric care for practicing nurses.

**3 applications** were used in the writing of the paper.

The presented **abstract** fully reflects the content of the dissertation work.

The PhD student presents **two publications** in connection with the dissertation work - one of which as an independent author, and the second one as the first author.

The presented dissertation work on the topic: "**Ethical aspects of the health care provided by nurses to elderly and older people**" by lecturer Petya Georgieva Krumova, in terms of relevance, precision of the methodology, quality of the obtained results and significance of the scientific contributions, is in accordance with the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for the implementation of LDASRB and meets the requirements of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the MU - Varna.

The stated considerations give me the reason to give a **POSITIVE VOTE** and to propose to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.4. Public health, scientific specialty "Management of health care" to **Petya Georgieva Krumova.**

04/05/2024  
Sliven

Signature: .....  
/ Prof. Elena Grozeva Zheleva, PhD /

Заличено на основание чл. 5, §1, б. „В“ от Регламент (ЕС) 2016/679
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