



Fund “Nauka” Project № 19032 Resume – Competition-Based Session 2019:
“Socio-medical problems related to the institutionalization of people aged 65 and over”

Project leader: Prof. Lora Hristova Georgieva, MD, PhD

Project team:

1. Prof. Todorka Ignatova Kostadinova, PhD
2. Galina Atanasova Haralanova, MD
3. Yana Vladimirova Yordanova
4. Stiliyana Ilieva Ilieva
5. Alexandra Dimitrova Torbarova

Population aging is a global demographic trend that places the care of the population aged 65 and over among the serious health challenges worldwide. Bulgaria is among the leading countries in the world in terms of the relative share of people aged 65 and over (over 20% of the population). Ensuring a dignified existence for the elderly concerns not only them but also social functioning itself. Placement in a specialized social institution is a last resort, unwanted by the elderly, but in the absence of other care options, it remains the only alternative.

The aim of the project is to study the socio-medical problems related to the institutionalization of people aged 65 and over. For this purpose, the international experience in providing institutional care for people of this age will be analyzed. The provision of institutional services in Bulgaria and the alternative provision of home care will be systematized and analyzed. Special attention will be paid to the reasons for accommodation, as well as to the adaptation of people aged 65 and over in specialized social institutions, through a study in retirement homes for elderly people with different capacity and funding. The conditions of the institutional environment will be analyzed – material base, staffing, medical care, organization of life, etc. The readiness of students in health professions from the Medical University of Varna to support those placed in an institutional environment on a voluntary basis will be studied.

Based on the information obtained from the documentary and empirical research, opportunities for prevention of institutionalization, improvement of the lives of those placed in retirement homes for the elderly, overcoming social isolation, and opportunities for deinstitutionalization will be considered.

Achieved results:

1. The international experience in providing institutional care for people aged 65 and over was analysed;
2. The institutional services for persons aged 65 and over in Bulgaria were systematized and analysed;
3. The main reasons for institutionalization of persons aged 65 and over were analysed;
4. The problems related to the adaptation of the elderly persons to life in an institutional environment were analysed;
5. The socio-medical problems of the life of the elderly in a social institution were analysed;
6. The readiness of students in health professions to support people aged 65 and over in an institutional environment on a voluntary basis was studied;
7. A socio-demographic and health profile of the elderly people accommodated in a social institution has been made, which is useful for the planning and organization of the necessary care;
8. The detailed research of the conditions and main problems in the institutional environment is a solid basis for creating practices for material and staff optimization of the environment, improving the lives of residents, prevention of complications, overcoming social isolation and greater social engagement.