

OPINION

OF ASS. PROF. KRISTINA PETROVA ZAHARIEVA
RUSE UNIVERSITY "ANGEL KANCHEV"

Faculty of Public Health and Healthcare,
Department of "Medical and Clinical - Diagnostic Activities"

on the dissertation of Teodora Staneva Radeva
with topic

NURSING CARE FOR DEPENDENT PATIENTS
WITH PSYCHIATRIC COMORBIDITY

Doctoral Supervisors

Prof. Hristo Kozhuharov, PhD

Prof. Elena Zheleva, PhD

for award of educational and scientific degree of Doctor
area of higher education 7. Health Care and Sport,
occupational strand 7.4. Public Health,
Scientific speciality: "Health Care Management"

Information on the procedure

By order of the Rector of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov", Varna No. P-109-33 dated 31.01.2020 *Teodora Staneva Radeva* is enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the doctoral program in "Health Care Management" at the Health Care Department, Affiliate Sliven of Medical University of Varna for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree of "doctor" in the field of higher education 7. Health Care and Sports, occupational strand 7.4. Public Health, in the doctoral program in Health Care Management.

By decision of the Academic Council (protocol No. 65/09.03.2023) on the grounds of Art. 24, para. 6 and Art. 30, para. 3 of the Implementing Regulations to the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and Art. 68, para. 1 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at Medical University - Varna, *Teodora Staneva Radeva* was dismissed with right of defence by Order No. R-109-197/16.03.2023 of the Rector of MU-Varna.

I present this opinion as a member of a Scientific Board, selected and voted by the Academic Council of Medical University - Varna (Report No. 65/09.03.2023) and appointed by Order No. R-109-197/16.03.2023 of the Rector of the Medical University - Varna for the elaboration of a procedure for defence of the dissertation with topic "Nursing care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity" of *Teodora Staneva Radeva*, a doctoral student in the Department of "Health Care", Affiliate Sliven of Medical University - Varna. According to Report No. 1/30.03.2023 from the first meeting of the Scientific Board, I have been assigned to present an opinion on the dissertation.

The submitted set of materials have been prepared on paper and electronic media is prepared in accordance with 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 thesis “Nursing care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity” proposed for defence is dedicated to a socially significant problem and is the result of *Teodora Radeva*’s long-term and focused work.

Education and training

Teodora Radeva completed her medical education as a nursing student in 1998 at Shumen Medical College under Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”, Varna, and continued steadily afterwards her professional development and training. In 2001 she obtained Bachelor’s degree in Social Pedagogy at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, and in 2010 – Master’s degree in Health Care Management at Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”, Varna.

Professional career and academic development

She worked from 1999 to 2007 as a nurse in the institution for seniors with mental disorders in the village of Cherni Vrah; 2007-2015 - a senior nurse in the First Psychiatric Clinic at University General Hospital Sveta Marina EAD; from January 2019 until now – a senior nurse in the Second Psychiatric Clinic at University General Hospital Sveta Marina EAD, Varna

On 31.01.2020 *Teodora Radeva* was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the doctoral program in “Health Care Management” at the Health Care Department, Affiliate Sliven of Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”, Varna. She participates as a mentor in the training of nursing and health care management students, MU-Varna, and as a mentor for the training organization of University General Hospital Sveta Marina EAD Varna under project BG05M20P001-2.002-001 “Student Practice - Phase 1”, Ministry of Education and Science.

The doctoral student’s participation in clinical studies, scientific events and forms of continuing education are criteria for professional development and improvement.

Teodora Radeva is the chairperson of the PD of the Bulgarian Association of Healthcare Professionals at University General Hospital Sveta Marina EAD, a member of the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association and the Bulgarian Scientific Society for Public Health.

The doctoral student has 2 scientific publications in connection with the dissertation, she uses English and Russian.

Characteristics of the dissertation

The dissertation elaborated by *Teodora Radeva* has a structure that is standard for the professional field and includes: introduction, first chapter “Literature Overview; second chapter “Aims, Tasks, Materials and Methods”; chapter three “Results and Discussion”; chapter four “Conclusions; Recommendations and Contributions”. The main text is 126 pages, including 58 tables, 15 figures and 7 appendices. The content corresponds to the topic and reflects the results of the research done by the doctoral student. The bibliographic reference contains 187 titles, 40 of which are in Cyrillic, 129 in Latin and 18 Internet addresses.

Assessment of the relevance of the topic

Teodora Radeva’s dissertation deals with a relevant, essential and significant problem related to the high incidence of addictions and accompanying mental disorders. The dissertation examines the development of professional skills and competencies both in nurses and the multidisciplinary clinical team (MCT) and in students specializing in health care with the aim of improving psychiatric nursing care. This makes the chosen topic relevant, interesting and

suitable for a dissertation.

The *introduction* presents the social, scientific and practical significance of the researched problem.

The *first chapter covers the literature review* dedicated to various aspects of the studied problem. Based on the literary sources, the author thoroughly examines psychiatry as a science from ancient times to the present day, mental health, the organization, operation, current problems and trends of psychiatric care in Bulgaria, the organization of psychiatric health care, the nature and importance of psychiatric comorbidity, the nursing process in psychiatric health care, the ethical and legal aspects in psychiatric nursing, the current legislation related to dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity, the coordination between the structures in the current system involved in the treatment of dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity, and the codependency in families affected by psychoactive substance use disorders.

The literature review and the bibliographic reference are criteria for the high level of awareness and competence of the doctoral student on the subject under consideration.

Methodology and organization of the study

In the second chapter, the purpose, tasks, object and subject of the study, the working hypotheses, sources for gathering information, research tools and methods used are precisely formulated. The main goal is precisely and clearly stated: *“To study the organization of psychiatric health care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity in hospital and non-hospital environments and to determine the possibilities for their optimization”*. It is developed in six correctly formulated tasks, the implementation of which reflects the research work carried out by the PhD student. There are 3 working hypotheses. The methodology is described in detail. The study included 294 respondents divided into groups: 44 nurses and 14 MCT working in Psychiatric clinics of University General Hospital Sveta Marina EAD, Varna; 68 dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity who were treated at the Second Psychiatric Clinic of the University General Hospital Sveta Marina EAD, Varna; 68 co-dependent persons - relatives of the patients; 100 3rd and 4th year nursing students and 4th year midwifery students from the affiliates of MU Varna (Shumen, Sliven, Veliko Tarnovo) and 38 patients with a relapse within 1 to 3 months after discharge from hospital.

The organization of the study is presented in detail - subject, object, scope, stages, methods, criteria, indicators and tools.

The study used documentary, statistical and sociological methods, six questionnaires containing open, closed and semi-open questions, and a self-report questionnaire for the study of codependency. The study was conducted after approval by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Medicine - Varna with Decision No. 111/20.01.2022; it was carried out independently in five stages in the period 2021 - January 2023 in the cities of Varna, Sliven, Shumen and Veliko Tarnovo.

The third chapter presents the model of the study, reveals the actual state of the problem in practice, provides the results obtained from the ascertaining research. The results are analysed in-depth. Theoretical, mathematical, statistical processing and interpretation of the empirical data is presented.

The conclusions, recommendations and contributions are presented in the fourth chapter of the dissertation.

Nine conclusions were formulated on the basis of the theoretical and empirical study reflecting the results of the study in a synthesized form. The conclusions reflect the

implementation of the tasks of the study.

Contributions of theoretical nature

The importance of psychiatric assistance in Bulgaria is emphasized and the organization of psychiatric care in Bulgaria is studied.

An in-depth analysis of the regulatory documents concerning the organization of psychiatric health care in hospital and non-hospital environments is made.

The nursing care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity is analysed and the findings concerning its development and improvement are stated.

Contributions of practical and applied nature

The created and functioning circle “Introduction To Psychiatric Nursing” for nursing students has a high practical value for optimizing the learning process and forming professional skills and competencies in students specializing in health care in the form of practical training.

The possibility for psychiatric nurses to participate in information campaigns and interventions on problems specific to dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity / DPPC/ will contribute to upgrading their professional skills and competencies.

The setting up and functioning of a psychiatric nursing practice to support dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity /DPPC/ will complement and build on the theoretical and practical knowledge of health care professionals and students to provide adequate psychiatric nursing care.

I would recommend *Teodora Radeva* to prepare informational material on the subject in an appropriate format for health care professionals, students, dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity and family members of dependent persons.

The doctoral student has presented two publications related to the topic of the dissertation.

The abstract meets the generally accepted requirements in terms of structure. The content of the dissertation is reflected fully and accurately. The most important results and the established dependencies are presented, as well as the conclusions, contributions, and recommendations of the study.

Conclusion

The presented dissertation “Nursing care for dependent patients with psychiatric comorbidity” shows the thorough knowledge of the doctoral student in the studied subject. I appreciate the importance and relevance of the dissertation, the topic of which *Teodora Radeva* did not choose randomly, but based on her professional experience in the field of psychiatric health care. In the elaboration of the dissertation the doctoral student demonstrates skills in applying the methodology of scientific research work. The conducted study corresponds to the tasks set.

On the basis of the above, I give my positive vote and propose to the respected members of the Scientific Board to vote positively for the award of educational and scientific degree of “Doctor” to *Teodora Staneva Radeva* in scientific specialty “Health Care Management”.

14.04.2023

Ruse

Opinion prepared by:

Ass. Prof. Kristina Zaharieva, PhD