PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD OF “HEALTH CARE”

Petya Kasnakova, Danka Obreshkova and Valentina Petkova*

Medical University - Plovdiv, Medical College, Plovdiv, Bulgaria Medical University – Sofia, Faculty of Pharmacy.

SUMMARY

The education of specialists in the specialty of "Health care" in Bulgaria has changed significantly in the recent years. There is an increasing demand for health care and mobility of professionals providing the latter. This justifies the introduction of professional training of specialists with skills to provide health care to advanced level, adaptability, communication, mobility, teamwork, responsibility etc. Their adaptation takes place in a situation of dynamically changing needs, values, ways of communicating with social groups within the profession and beyond. This raises the need for excellence in professional training as a strategy of behavior which results in consistency and perseverance in carrying out professional activities.

KEYWORDS: Professional development, of specialty “physiotherapy”

INTRODUCTION

Professional competence of medical specialists is a must in order to achieve a higher quality of medical services and a higher level of health. Well-prepared, with knowledge in clinical medicine and practical skills, medical specialists - physiotherapists can be helpful in carrying out the mere processes of improvement in the healthcare system by applying the principles of adequacy, timeliness, efficiency, orderliness and humanity, scientific relevance.\[1-3\]

The learning process forms not only professional competence but also motivates students to work independently, increases their professional and cognitive interest, which is a guarantee for future self-perfection. Through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as forming
specific professional conduct, modern medical specialists could successfully exert influence on the mainstream fields in health care.[4-5]

The necessity of our study is derived primarily from the public importance of the profession of physiotherapists, from some changes of its functions imposed by a number of objective and subjective factors.

The reasons for the survey are to support the future careers of health staff, to provide quality training of students and to prepare competitive specialists for the labor market.

After graduation, physiotherapists have the necessary professional theoretical and practical competence. Their work is expected to meet high-quality standards so that they, as good professionals, could comply with the norms of quality medical practice; to work in full harmony with physicians and other medical specialists; to observe professional responsibility and discipline; to respect the patient and his relatives; to observe medical ethics; to strive to restore and preserve the health of the patient; to comply with all obligations and rights registered in the job description.

AIM OF THE STUDY
A study of the factors for professional formation of medical specialists – physiothera[ists in the learning process at the Medical College - Plovdiv. The factors, motives and values influencing physiotherapist in their professional choices, are considered as determinants.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY MATERIALS
The contingent of monitoring are the students in the specialty of "Physiotherapist" in the first, second and third year, at the Medical College - Plovdiv - 125 respondents. Fig. 1
The monitored aspects are divided into two groups

- **Factorial, which are:** social and psychological aspects associated with:

  factors shaping attitudes towards choice of study and reasons for this choice;

- **Resultant aspects:** attitude toward specialty: Self-assessment of their preparedness to work in the specialty; hypothetical repeated choice of specialty; personal interest of students in acquiring high professional training; attitudes for having a career in the specialty; intention of students to work in the specialty.\(^4\)

The study was conducted in 2014/2015, at Medical College - Plovdiv.

The collection of primary statistical information for the study of the process of professionalization of the students in the specialty of "Physiotherapist" has been performed by using direct group inquiry. The survey questions are part of a study of greater dimesion involving different aspects of the learning process. Data from the research methodology especially tailored for the purposes of the survey give us information about students' opinions regarding the main indicators of professionalism: the intention of students to work in the specialty after completing their studies; preparedness of students to work in the specialty in which they are trained; readiness for a possible re-election of specialty.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

![Fig. № 2. Students’ opinion on their preparedness to work in their specialty.](image)

As a key indicator of professionalization in the research is considered the **intent of the students to work in the specialty** after completing their studies. To the question about their intention to work in the specialty after completing MC, almost all (90%) of students said they
would work in the chosen specialty, and a total of about 10% said they were likely to distance themselves from the profession and declare changeable intentions to practice it in the future.

The second most important indicator of professionalism and quality of training is the opinion of the students about their intent to work in the specialty in which they are trained. (Fig. No 2).

About 1/5 (22.22%) of all respondents said they were fully prepared, half of them (53.97%) thought they were largely prepared for practice. An alarming share of about ¼ of the students claimed that their level of preparation is to a small extent (15.08%) or they were not at all prepared to work in the specialty (8.73%). About 76% of the trainees expressed their confidence that they were prepared to work in the health network.

An especially informative for the attitude to the profession of students trained in the specialty of "Physiotherapist" is the question of the survey related to the hypothetical repeated choice of specialty. The responses to the question: "If I had to choose again, would I choose the same specialty?", expressed in percentages, are presented in Fig. № 3.

The results show that more than half of the surveyed students would decisively repeat their choice of profession. An alarming result is the fact that about 43% of all students were not sure of their choice of reselection or categorically stated their reluctance to work in the specialty. The performed correlation analysis on Pearson shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between the variables "reselect the same specialty" and some of items
showing alienation from the specialty: "I have a feeling that this specialty is becoming repugnant" (R = - 0.46; p < 0.05). The results show that students who would not have chosen the profession of physiotherapists again, are more distant from it. Such is the relationship between "reselect the same specialty" and "attend the course of training formally’ (R = - 0.40; p < 0.05). Those respondents who would not make the same career choice again, to a large extent attend the education process formally. Significantly more important is the relationship between variables "reselect the same specialty" and the component of alienation from it: "I think there are other more interesting and relevant subjects for me" (R = - 0.58; p < 0.05). Students who are not sure of re-election of specialty, believe that there are other more interesting and more relevant courses for them.

**The students’ satisfaction with the quality of training** in the form of lectures, seminars and practical training is also adopted in this study to be a significant factor for the professional education of trainees. The results of the four-level scale for answers to this question are presented by mean values (Tab. № 1.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with quality of training</th>
<th>X mv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical training</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training in the hospital</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students showed greater satisfaction with the quality of the ongoing exercise, but statistically were less satisfied with the quality of clinical practice and internship, as well as the ongoing lecturing. It is possible that the practical application of knowledge and skills acquired during the seminars reflects the high student satisfaction from this form of education.

The satisfaction with lectures and practical training is lower. The specifics of the educational content of the medical disciplines, the difficult medical terminology, the need for knowledge of the Latin language, the lack of proactive visualization of lectures, the large number of students during classwork, the lack of action dynamics and others are the reasons why this form of training of respondents ranked in third position. The low level of students’ satisfaction with the practical training is associated with anxiety and uncertainty for their work in real conditions, the appointed procedures to be performed by students, the larger number of students during clinical practice. These are the reasons that determine the second
position of the practical training in the respondents' views on the quality of the ongoing practical training.[5-7]

Data from the methodology of this survey provide information on the factors that influence the attitude of students choosing the specialty "Physiotherapist" (Tab. № 2).

The results obtained are represented in mean values. At the highest level, the attitude of students was influenced by their ability to find work in the profession abroad (Xmv = 2.43). In the three-step scale for the respondents’ answers, the index ranks highly on the scale. The state of the labor market for physiotherapists in the European Union and the European credit-transfer system for educating students in this major enable graduates to find a job in the specialty in the European Union. Therefore, the worrying trend that medical practices of other countries make use of the resources of our medical education has continued.

**Tab. №. 2 Ranking of the factors for selection of specialty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Factors influencing the choice of specialty</th>
<th>X mv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Working abroad</td>
<td>2,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working in the country</td>
<td>2,25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal motives related to the specialty</td>
<td>2,12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Very good knowledge so far</td>
<td>1,90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer pressure</td>
<td>1,83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental pressure</td>
<td>1,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Personal charisma of professionals</td>
<td>1,54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic means</td>
<td>1,47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mass media</td>
<td>1,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>1,33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUSIONS**

1. Overall, profession-wise, students feel **largely well-trained**, and arguably this indicator grows in the higher courses.

2. The highest satisfaction is derived by the quality of the classwork, then ranks the quality of practical training and the lowest corresponds to the quality of the lectures. Students who are **highly motivated** to study in the specialty are profound, conscientious and active in the learning process, pay attention to the operating instructions, aspire to success in learning. Education in the specialty gives them pleasure, the profession becomes more attractive to them and they feel more connected with it;
3. The professional choice of students is most strongly influenced by the ability of the graduates to find a job abroad or in the country, less influenced by their success in high school, peer pressure and parental pressure, and the least affected by charismatic personalities in medicine, the financial status of the family, the massmedia and the family tradition.

**LITERATURE**

2. Ivanova St., Pankova St., Petkova V., Dimitrov M., Food additives with beneficial effects in the treatment of erectile dysfunction, containing L-Arginine, Pycnogenol and Ginseng extract. WJPPS, 2014; 3(11): 234-238
3. Ognjanov S, Pankova St, Social and health importance and analytical characteristics of Losartan, Pharmacia, 2014; 61(1): 67-79