

OPINION STATEMENT

by

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on Dissertation

“NURSERIES IN SUPPORT OF PARENTS FOR THE FORMATION OF HEALTHY HABITS IN CHILDREN”

by Diana Neycheva Grozdeva - Foteva

for the award of PhD

Area of higher education: 7. Healthcare and Sport

Professional field: 7.4. Public Health

Qualification: Healthcare Management

with the supervision of senior scientist Associate Professor Katya Genova Eguruze, MD

Procedure Details

By order of the Rector of MU-Varna No P-109-135 of 27.03.2020 Diana Neycheva Grozdeva – Foteva has been assigned as PhD student in individual form of education for the award of PhD in the area of higher education: 7. Healthcare and Sport, Professional field: 7.4. Public Health, qualification: Healthcare Management. A report has been submitted on the successful pass of doctoral examination. On the grounds of the resolution passed at a meeting of the Faculty Board of the faculty of Public Health as per minutes No 176 of 16.12.2021 with regards to preparedness for dissertation public defense and the appointment of Scientific Jury members, Diana Grozdeva has been discharged with the right of defense by order of the Rector of MU-Varna No P-109-590 of 22.12.2021.

Background and Career

Diana Neycheva Grozdeva – Foteva graduated from Prof. Dr. Nencho Nikolaev Medical College – Varna, qualification Nurse – Pediatric Care in 1990, then started work as a nurse in the premature infant ward at United Regional Clinical Hospital in the town of Dobrich.

In 2000 she earned a master’s degree in Administrative and Health Management at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. In 2002 she earned a “Teacher” postgraduate qualification at Konstantin Preslavski University of Shumen. In 2013 Diana Grozdeva successfully completed the course of studies and was awarded a master’s degree in Healthcare Management at Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov Medical University – Varna.

Diana Grozeva’s career related to university education began in 1996 as a lecturer at the Medical College of Dobrish, Medial College – Varna (2005-2006) and, since 2006, at the Healthcare Department at the Faculty of Public Health of Medical University – Varna. In a contest in 2018 she was appointed at the academic position of University Assistant at the abovementioned department in the Nurse educational sector.

Diana is part of creative teams as a co-writer of a teaching aid in palliative care, a

course book entitled “Child – Norm and Pathology – Compendium on Nurse Care” as well as practice guidelines on nurse care. She is a holder of a second certificate issued by the National Quality Council on quality healthcare. She has completed over 50 courses for further training on both national and international level in the field of healthcare. She has more than 25 scientific publications as well as over 45 participations in national and international conferences.

Since 2021 she has been registered for specialization in the non-clinical specialty of Clinical Social Work.

Descriptive Characteristic of the Dissertation

The dissertation prepared by Diana Grozdeva comprises 149 pages; it is structured in compliance with the standard requirements and contains the following: Introduction, Literature Review, Purpose, Tasks, Methods and Organization of research, Results and Discussion, Conclusions, Contributions and recommendations. It has a number of illustrations, including 40 figures, 4 tables and 6 annexes. The bibliographic reference contains 182 sources, of which 81 in Cyrillic and 101 in Latin letters.

Evaluation of Topic Relevance

The topic of the dissertation is contemporary and relevant. Early childhood is a period of intensive development of a child’s brain and senses, but it is also crucial with regards to parents’ “maturity” in their role of closet social environment for the child. Therefore, this period is essential in terms of providing timely support to both the child and the family. In every society, children are the most valuable asset and all efforts should be directed towards the proper raising and upbringing of children. A child’s development is the result of complex, ongoing, dynamic interaction of biological and social factors. The optimal development of a child depends on the beneficial environment - nutrition, good health, caring and stimulating parenting. Modern living conditions impose the need for the majority of children at a very early age to enter childcare facilities, i.e. nurseries. The research carried out to identify behavioral models in infants has established that the time spent in a childcare facility is of essential significance. The formation of a healthy lifestyle begins on the very first day of a newborn’s life. Building a healthy diet and appropriate parenting are the first steps in creating proper conditions of healthy lifestyle for the child. Nurseries are structures of independent organization where infants are taken care of, brought up and educated. Positive results from such care and upbringing could only be expected under the conditions of successful and constant collaboration between the nursery and the family. The research in the influence of nurseries in support of parents on the formation of healthy habits in children presented in Diana Grozdeva’s dissertation, being relevant, promising and practically viable, proves its scientific significance in healthcare management.

Literature Review

The author has presented an analytical overview of relevant literature reviewing the historical aspects of the origin and development of organized childcare and the experience worldwide as well as in Bulgaria. In logical order, Diana Grozdeva examines the participation

of medical specialists in patronage care and children's consultation. The nursery personnel and the nurse's role in the formation of healthy habits in children up to the age of 3 has been discussed.

The PhD student's experience and knowledge have enabled the correct and thorough analysis of the specifics of health education and the process of building healthy habits in infants. The conditions and factors affecting the habit building process have been analyzed.

The dissertation outlines the necessity of evaluation of individual features and adoption of individual approach for the purpose of improving the collaboration between parents and the nurse at the nursery in order to achieve agreement as regards the raising and upbringing of the child.

The logically structured literature review reveals the PhD student's wide competence in the field of the issue explored herein.

Methodology of Research

The main purpose and the tasks have been accurately formulated and prove the precision of research work conducted by Diana Grozdeva. The author has used a wide range of methods that are suitable for the purpose. The structure and contents of the developed instruments are in accordance with the specifics of the information collected from the respective group of respondents. A method for improving the efficiency of collaboration with parents has been developed and approbated for the purpose of exploring and analyzing the nurse's role in a nursery for the formation of healthy habits in children.

The research method employed is documental and sociological. With view of revealing the essence of the phenomena under observation and their interdependence some statistical analysis methods and data interpretation have been applied.

An original author's Methodology has been developed for improving the efficiency of collaboration between nurse and parents, and applied for evaluation of such collaboration in building healthy habits in children up to the age of 3.

The research instruments have been developed by the author herself and include research charts on nurses' and parents' opinions to establish the level of adoption of healthy habits in children before applying the Methodology. In order to research nurses' opinion about the change in forming each of the habits after applying the Methodology, a Habit Monitoring Sheet has been prepared.

Results and Discussion

The dissertation presents logically formulated and structured results in chapter three. It puts forward results from conducted research in the characterization of infants in nurseries by age groups and planning regions in Bulgaria for the period 2010-2020.

The research deals with parents' and nurses' opinions about healthy habits in children in nurseries. It analyses the active collaboration with the family as a successful partnership in the proper timely and sustainable adoption of healthy habits. The PhD student analyzes the level of habits related to the health of children attending nurseries by studying parents' opinions on upbringing. The research has shown lack of confidence among parents and a

necessity for professional support and information. A significant difference has been observed in the behavior of parents and nurses in nurseries in seeking collaboration in the building of healthy habits in children. Raising the family's awareness enables the setting of precise and measurable goals as well as monitoring children's progress. Diana Grozdeva has adeptly examined parents' feedback with the aim of studying the motivation, the support of infants' continuous efforts and ensuring a sense of achievement. The PhD student has established a need to join parents' and nurses' efforts in the provision of proper health education for children. Sharing the problems and the willingness to find the correct solution helps them in the process of building and strengthening of healthy habits in children. The results demonstrate nurses' competences with respect to the formation of healthy habits. The research studies the necessity of specific education and planning of activities in order to obtain knowledge in the most appropriate support and direction of education and upbringing of children to achieve utmost health wellness.

As a result of thorough research, the necessary type of competence and skills have been defined, both in the personal and professional aspect, as regards consultation and education for the purpose of successful and unproblematic building of healthy behavior in children. The author described the specificities of infancy affecting the formation of habits in children, of parents' education and use of feedback, monitoring, guidance, encouragement and rewarding.

The research results have determined some basic prerequisites for the development of the original author's methodology for improving the efficiency of collaboration between parents and nurse in the formation of healthy habits in children.

The methodology has been successfully approbated during the adaptation period of children in Detelina nursery in the city of Varna. It includes the main components developed by Diana Grozdeva: assessment of the baseline level of hygienic and health habits of children entering the nursery; parent education; collaborative work for a period of 6 month; results and evaluation. The developed criteria and the evaluation sheet of acquired habits presented by the PhD student in a comprehensible way enable and enhance the management of the process in organized childcare establishments for children up the age of 3.

The author has implemented a Model for building healthy habits in nurseries involving the nurse and the family. The PhD student has considered the results and successfully defined them as deficiencies in current practices.

A need for further information occurred which motivated the PhD student to draw guidelines titled *Practical Advice for Parents*. In this work, Diana Grozdeva synthesizes the information about healthy habits and gives valuable practical advice. The guidelines outline some major directions for the formation of healthy habits in infants. Several hygienic habits have been discussed for which brief algorithms have been suggested. In order to facilitate parents, directions have been given for faster and proper formation of healthy habits and some common setbacks have been examined. The guidelines contain abundant visual material which makes it easier for parents to comprehend, and ends with a poem written by the author, which can be of help to children to remember and perform the activities related to building healthy habits more easily.

The reference on the contributions presented in the dissertation objectively reflects Diana Grozdeva's actual accomplishments. The contributions in the dissertation are in the theoretical and practical applied aspect, which I find acceptable.

The seven conclusions that have been drawn, clearly and accurately formulated, characterize in detail the results from the fulfilment of the tasks and the purpose of the dissertation. It is the first time in Bulgaria that the issues of nurseries being in support of parents for the formation of healthy habits in children has been examined in detail.

A purposeful and thorough research has been conducted in the process of formation of health habits in infancy involving the participation of nurses in nurseries and parents. Practical directions and methodology have been suggested to improve the efficiency of collaboration between parents and the nurse in the nursery.

The recommendations and contributions formulated in the dissertation are those drawn based on the author's data gained during the scientific research.

The dissertation has been fluently written and is accurate with respect to terminology.

In relations with the dissertation, the author has presented four full text publications in prestigious scientific journals.

The abstract truthfully represents the contents of the dissertation.

Personal Impressions

I know Diana Grozdeva in person and have witnessed her professional development in the healthcare department at the Faculty of Public Health. It is my assessment that her theoretical knowledge and practical skills are on a very high level. She is a motivated, successful and promising colleague. I highly appreciate her determination, precision, intelligence, diligence and strive for perfection. Diana Grozdeva has distinguished herself with her exceptional loyalty and her honesty both in relationships and research work.

Conclusion

Diana Neycheva Grozdeva-Foteva's dissertation possesses high scientific and practical value which contributes to the optimization of the involvement of nurseries, in support of parents, in the formation of healthy habits in children. On account of the overall assessment of the documentation presented to me, it is my opinion that Diana Neycheva Grozdeva-Foteva entirely meets the requirements under the Act of Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the implementation of the former and the Regulations of Development of Academic Staff of the Medical University - Varna.

I give my positive vote for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Diana Neycheva Grozdeva-Foteva in the specialty Healthcare Management.

26.01.2022
Varna


Drawn by:
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