

OPINION

by Assoc. Teodora Nikolaeva Evtimova, d.oz.
Deputy Director Filial Shumen, Department of Health Care,
Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov" - Varna
of a dissertation on:
**"Contemporary Aspects of Ensuring a Safe Hospital Environment in
Nursing Practice"**
of a PhD student: Zhaneta Vasileva Stoyanova _
for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"
Field of higher education: 7. Health care and sports
Professional direction 7.4. Public health
Major: "Health Care Management"

Procedure data

Zhaneta Stoyanova is enrolled as a doctoral student in an independent form of study in the doctoral program "Health Care Management", professional direction 7.4. Public health, according to Order No. R-109-43/31.01.2020. of the Rector of the MU - Varna. Scientific supervisor is prof. Dr. Sonia Toncheva, d.o.s.n. Protocols for successfully passing the doctorate minimum exam and proficiency in a foreign language level B1 are presented.

I present this opinion in my capacity as a member of a scientific jury, determined by Order No. R-109-120/15.02.2023. of the Rector of the Medical University - Varna in connection with the defense of the dissertation work of Zhaneta Vasileva Stoyanova for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

Biographical data and career development of the doctoral student

Zhaneta Vasileva Stoyanova completed her basic medical education at the "Dr. Nencho Nikolaev" University of Varna in 1989, majoring in "Nursing". In 1999, he acquired the educational qualification "Bachelor" in the specialty "Health Care Management" at the Medical University - Sofia. He also graduated in a bachelor's program in Public Health, and later in a master's in "Health Care Management" at the Medical University - Varna. She began her professional activity in 1989 as a nurse in the emergency department of the Naval Hospital in the city of Varna, and later worked in a cardiology office. From 2001 to the present, she has been the head nurse at the Multispecialty Hospital for Active Treatment - Varna at the Military Medical Academy. In the month of September, 2021, she was enrolled for the specialization "Hospital Hygiene, Prevention and Control of Infections" at the Medical University - Varna. In the "Health Care" department at the Health and Welfare Institute, exercises are conducted in the discipline "Nursing care for patients with somatic diseases", clinical practice and pre-graduate internship for students from the "Nursing" specialty. He is the supervisor of a pre-graduate internship for students majoring in "Health Care Management" with a master's degree.

Zhaneta Stoyanova develops and improves her theoretical and practical training through participation in seminars and continuing education courses.

There are 14 publications and participation in national and international conferences in the field of public health .

General characteristics of the dissertation work

The dissertation work, presented by Zhaneta Stoyanova , was developed in a volume of 147 pages, with the standard structure for the professional area, including five chapters (Literature review, Methodology of scientific research, Own research, Practical approaches to optimize the process to ensure a safe hospital environment , Conclusions, proposals and recommendations) , conclusion, used literature and 5 appendices . The presented scientific work is illustrated with 47 figures and 34 tables. The bibliographic list is composed of 260 literary sources, of which 66 are in Cyrillic and 194 are in Latin.

Evaluation of the structure and content of the dissertation work

The PhD student focused her scientific interest on a current problem, related to determining the role and contribution of nurses in the process of ensuring a safe hospital environment, as a condition for quality and safe care.

The literature review clarifies the role and functions of the nurse, regarding activities in their practice directly related to providing a safe hospital environment. Safety, as the main focus of healthcare, is a multifaceted process, a prerequisite for reducing the risk of harm to patients and staff. International experience (USA, Russia, UK) is presented through models of good practice for nurses' adherence to safe health care. A historical review is made from the theory of the environment in Florence Nightingale's model to the contemporary development of effective delivery of safe health care .

In the final part of the literature review, 4 conclusions are made related to the provision of a safe hospital environment in sister's practice , as an integral part of the overall concept of nursing. For strategy development in Bulgaria, relating to the problem are necessary new a vi zia and approach founded on evidence and the application on modern scientifically based methodology in real nursing practice.

In the second chapter, the methodology of the scientific research is presented. The main **objective** of the dissertation is : *"To investigate the modern aspects of ensuring a safe hospital environment with the participation of nurses and, on this basis, to develop optimal practical approaches guaranteeing safety"*. The 6 tasks set accurately reflect the research activity carried out by the doctoral student . 3 working hypotheses are formulated .

The survey conducted is among four groups of respondents: – **nurses**, working in high-risk departments of the Medical Center , within the scope of the Medical Academy (n = 145), **professors** from the Department of Health Care at the University of Varna , including branches in the cities of Shumen, Veliko Tarnovo and Sliven (n = 20) , **patients hospitalized** in a high-risk clinic/department from the spread of infections related to medical care in the Medical Center - Varna to the Medical Academy, including intensive and surgical clinics and departments (n = 100) , **experts**, including head nurses of multi-specialty hospitals within the scope of the VMA, university hospitals and training bases of the Medical University - Varna (n = 10) , health care professionals with acquired specialty "Hospital hygiene, infection prevention

and control" (n = 6) and medical epidemiologists and public health inspectors working in university , multidisciplinary and specialist hospitals (n = 6)

For each group, a questionnaire was developed with questions on several main thematic areas related to the assessment of the process of ensuring a safe hospital environment and the practical application of a model for optimizing the management system and ensuring a safe hospital environment .

The empirical research conducted by the doctoral student, through developed questionnaires for conducting a semi-structured interview (applied among university professors) and an in-depth interview (of experts), is aimed at the subject of the conducted research - the role and functions of the nurse in ensuring a safe hospital environment and the possibilities to optimize the process.

The stages of the study are presented clearly and in detail in tabular form and described with certain activities, tools, place and scope.

The sociological methods used in the study are adequately applied, and the statistical methods for processing the information contribute to the scientific significance and credibility of the results.

In the third chapter, results and analysis of own sociological research are presented. The results of the four surveyed groups are logically formed, structured and analyzed.

An integrated quantitative and qualitative approach was applied to assess the role and contribution of the nurse in the process of ensuring a safe hospital. An analysis and interpretation of the results in several thematic categories of the conducted semi-structured interview and the in-depth interview was made. Significant and highly relevant are the statements of the experts who prove that nurses have a key role and it can be optimized through training and the introduction of new models and practices. Nurses are also aware of the need for continuous training aimed at effectively implementing the process of ensuring a safe hospital environment in their practice, with a view to promoting behavior as active participants in the process of providing safe care .

Nurses are in a unique position to help optimize the process of providing a safe hospital environment in their practice. This is evidenced by the results of the surveys, which show the strong opinion of the other groups of respondents (nurses and patients) about the essential role of nurses in the process of ensuring a safe hospital environment. The participation on the medical sister like full-fledged member on the infection control and environmental safety team, with own responsibilities and competencies is and the new one vision for the role on the sister in the safe health care system as a whole and will contributed for his effectively flow.

The doctoral student's contribution is the thematically systematized proposals of the experts for optimizing the process of ensuring a safe hospital environment and the role of nurses in it .

Chapter four presents practical approaches for optimizing the process to ensure a safe hospital environment with the participation of nurses .

On the base on researched global best practices and based on her professional experience, Zhaneta Vasileva has developed **an Organizational Framework for the Improvement of the Safe Hospital Environment Process** regarding the key strategic, clinical and operational components related to the achievement of a safe and reliable hospital environment.

The doctoral student developed and structured a **Model for optimizing the process of ensuring a safe hospital environment in the practice of nurses**, which is a set of tools and activities performed in a certain sequence in order to optimize the process of management, control and evaluation of the safe hospital environment. The model has six supporting components of nursing practice that are interrelated, overlapping each other - leadership, skill support, critical thinking, safety culture, quality and patient safety. The uniqueness of **the Model** is in the integration, the balance (each area is equally important) and the interaction of the elements. **The process optimization model for ensuring a safe hospital environment** can to change the mindset of nurses towards evidence-based practice - an approach to continuous improvement of care in the focus of the safety of the hospital environment. **The model** will also be effective for healthcare professionals due to the possibilities to reduce the likelihood of organizational and medical errors, improve communication and ensure effective protection by avoiding preventable risks in the hospital environment. Its integration in sister's practice will cooperates for ensuring a safe hospital environment from the medical sister , while at the same time will her protect from responsibility at realization on risk concomitant this process .

The conclusions from the analysis of the literary sources, the international experience and the conducted research are reduced to nine, practically oriented, which follow the set research tasks and logically derive from the obtained results.

The dissertation work has theoretical-cognitive and practical-applied contributions to medical practice, which I accept as significant.

The **recommendations** for the development of practical approaches guaranteeing the provision of a safe hospital environment with the participation of nurses are addressed to institutions in the field of health care and education in the Republic of Bulgaria - Ministry of Health, medical institutions, BAPZG and the Medical Universities.

In connection with the dissertation work, the doctoral student has presented 5 publications in three of which she is the sole author, which proves the active participation of Zhaneta Vasileva in the scientific research activity.

The author's abstract in terms of structure and content meets the requirements of the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Medicine - Varna.

Conclusion

The presented dissertation „**Modern Aspects of Ensuring a Safe Hospital Environment in Nursing Practice**“ is the first by the genus you are for our country comprehensively, purposefully and thoroughly study on the possibilities for optimization participation on medical _ nurse in the process of providing a safe hospital environment in nursing practice . I appreciate the relevance and relevance of the topic chosen by the doctoral student, guided by her professional experience in the field of health care. The rich professional experience and knowledge of the doctoral student contribute to a thorough description of the role of the nurse in the process of ensuring a safe hospital environment


The dissertation meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) , the Regulations for the Implementation

of the ZRASRB and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University - Varna for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" .

me the reason to give a positive assessment of the submitted dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Zhaneta Vasileva Stoyanova in "Health Care Management", field of higher education: 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.4. Public health.

03. 04.2023.

Prepared the opinion:


Associate Professor Teodora Evtimova, Ph.D.