

# THE TRAINING OF GERIATRIC SPECIALISTS IN MEDICAL COLLEGE AT TRAKIA UNIVERSITY, STARA ZAGORA, BULGARIA - IMPORTANT TOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY FOR ACHIEVING BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OLD PEOPLE

*Dimova Mariya,  
PhD Assoc. Prof Milcheva Hristina,*

*Bulgaria, Stara Zagora, Medical College at Trakia University –TrU*

**Abstract.** Demographic indicators of are dynamic and reported an increase in the length of human life and the aging the world population. This has emerged as an irreversible process, which is particularly valid for Bulgaria, because it ranks fifth in the world in pace of aging of the population.

The purpose of this research is to determine the role and place of the new geriatric specialists from the Medical College of Trakia University, Stara Zagora, for improving the quality of life of elderly and old people.

*Materials and Methods:* Documentary, counterfactual analysis, monitoring

*Results:* Medical College at Trakia University set up and accredits new for the country specialty "Geriatric Care" for which is approved administration of 60 students state order. Based on the analysis and comparison of the competencies of geriatric specialists with fundamental targets set at national level thus improving the quality of life of adults and older people from Bulgaria in the part of delivery of quality long-term care are made conclusions about the geriatric specialists as important tool of social policy in achieving high quality life of life in geriatric age..

**Keywords:** demographic factors, long - term care, competence, quality of life, social policy

**Introduction.** Demographics indicators are dynamic and reported increasing the length of human life as well as aging of the global population. It emerged as an irreversible process that is particularly valid for Bulgaria, because it ranks fifth in the world in the rate of aging [1].

On the occasion of the International Day of Older People, October 1, the General Secretary of the United Nations proclaimed the following: "People around the world are living longer, all humanity should be concerned to make the aging process productive, active and healthy ... so it can benefit for the older generation." "This is a call to develop strategies that will enable older persons to live in an environment that promotes their skills, strengthen their independence and to support them" [4].

In our country besides the alarming demographic problems, economic, social and health indicators also showed negative trends. Impoverishment is most sensitive among vulnerable populations, including adults and the elderly. This already gives them negative feelings and depression, which makes them feel more abandoned, more lonely and more isolated. Especially those who have lost part of their ability to cope independently in everyday life and that need support.

The social system in the country is undergoing constant change, but still does not provide the necessary protection and support of the elderly. This significantly affects the quality of life of this population. National social policy, taking into account the disturbing demographic characteristics, is looking for ways to overcome this problem [1], [2]. In order to respond adequately and to respond to these demographic changes, it is important to developed alternative forms of coping. A change in the thinking of society in a social, cultural and individual plan. It is necessary to provide accessible and safe environment, suitable transport infrastructure, high-tech equipment to support the orientation and mobility of the elderly. The existing infrastructure is largely unsuitable and is is not adapted to the specific needs of the elderly.

It is necessary the adults with physical disabilities and living alone, to be trained in the use of modern information and communication technologies. Often they are incomprehensible and unclear

for them. Therefore, it is necessary to develop more easier and understandable informative products that meet the individual needs and technical capabilities of users.

Older people feel safe and protected in their natural environment, home. The home care is a part of long-term care. In this way the living spaces should be functional and adapted to the specific needs and preferences of the elderly, so as to provide them with the necessary comfort. With the increasing life expectancy, the number of people needing care will grow in the future. An important component for decent life in old age is the protection and promotion of independence and activity.

Currently in the country a care for adults and the elderly is provided mainly by nurses and unskilled personnel/social assistants, personal assistants, domestic helpers, paramedics, medical assistants and others. These professionals do not have specific competence in geriatric care. Demographic change means a radical change in education that constantly need to update the majors because the availability of trained geriatric specialists would enhance the quality of life of older people [1].

**The purpose** of this study is to determine the role and place of the new geriatric specialists from the Medical College of Trakia University, Stara Zagora, to improve the quality of life of adults and the elderly.

**Materials and Methods:** Documentary, benchmarking, monitoring.

**Discussion and results.** Medical College at Trakia University, Stara Zagora, created new to the country accredited specialty "Geriatric care", with approved administration of 60 students state order. It was used the experience of teachers in international projects for training people in taking care for adults and the elderly. Specific observations and sharing German experience is the basis for the development of curriculum and training programs that are consistent with our national specifics.

In the qualification characteristics there are defined competencies of geriatric specialists and areas for development. The main competencies that will significantly improve the quality of life of the adults and the elderly people. Geriatric specialists are the link chain in multidisciplinary teams in geriatric care sectors.

Here are some **key competencies**. Geriatric specialist work purposefully, based on accumulated knowledge, based on social and health sciences and anthropological knowledge, which are an important prerequisite for professional action in geriatric care.

Geriatric specialist possesses the theoretical knowledge of age, health, disease and needs for long-term care; philosophy, science-based concepts, theories and models of health care and their compliance with specific situations; for health promotion and disease prevention; rehabilitation; a biographical work; ethical principles in caring and others.

1. **With regard to providing health care**, geriatric specialist works with the doctor and other professionals in a multidisciplinary team, and in some of the activities alone

- In the exercise of their profession in the field of geriatric care specialist must possess the following competencies:

- Application of hygienic care;
- Methods of administration of drugs – enteral and parenteral;
- The technique of bandages of different parts of the body;
- Prevention of nosocomial infection ;
- Preparation for conducting medical examination of various organs and systems;
- To provide special care for different groups of diseases;
- Monitoring of basic vital signs and recording of abnormal;
- For first aid in emergency situations;
- For dietary at different illnesses;
- For health promotion and disease prevention;
- To care for terminally ill and died;
- To work with the families (training, advising).

2. **As regards the provision of social support**, geriatric specialist helps older people in the design of their lives, conform their work to their personal, cultural, ethnic and religious particularities.

In the exercise of this profession, geriatric specialist must possess the following competencies:

- The peculiarities of the aging process;
- Social and family ties and relationships;
- To organize the design of everyday life - providing opportunities for employment and training for adults and elderly in the field of music, art, and culture;

- To work with different models of care in institutional and home environment;
- For analysis, planning, implementation, documentation and evaluation of care;
- To provide psychological help and support to deal with emergencies; to work with dying and death;
- Legal regulations for health and social services, professional associations and organizations and the types of institutions and directions, providing care for the adults and elderly;
- Prevention of professional conflicts;
- For verbal and nonverbal communication, culturally sensitive care;
- To promote and maintain the independence of the elderly people and preserve their privacy;
- Professional teamwork, cooperation and personal responsibility;
- To work on raising the importance of geriatric care; development of legislation, education and career geriatric specialist;
- The introduction of a new model of professional geriatric specialist to be competitive on national and international labor market [3].

Based on the analysis and comparison of competencies of geriatric specialists with key targets at the national level to improve the quality of life of adults and elderly people in Bulgaria, in part to provide quality long-term care we have concluded that geriatric specialists are an important tool of social policy to achieve better quality of life in geriatric age.

#### **Conclusions:**

1. The training of geriatric specialists at the Medical College of Trakia University, Stara Zagora, is largely adequate to the current social needs of the care of adults and older people. It is part of national priorities and an important instrument of social policy in terms of improving the quality of life in geriatric age.

2. Adequate and appropriate implementation of the new specialists in the structures providing long-term care for adults and old people and the regulation of the new profession will lead to filling the deficit of necessary geriatric specialists.

All this, together with a change of thinking and attitude of the society towards the problems of the elderly people will significantly affect their quality of life.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. National Health Strategy (2014-2020). Ministry of Health. Available from: <http://www.hapche.bg/sites/default/files/na/national-health-strategy-2020.pdf>
2. National Concept to promote active aging in Bulgaria (2012-2030). Council of Ministers Portal for public consultation. [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.strategy.bg/PublicConsultations/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=575>
3. Qualifications characteristic of "Geriatric care" at Medical College, Trakia University, 2015, Stara Zagora
4. Site INFORMATIONSDIENST DER VEREINTEN NATIONEN (UNIS) WIEN. [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/de/pressrels/2006/sgsm10659.html>