

mgr Aleksander Zarzeka

ANALYSIS OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES OF CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS REGARDING EXPANDING COMPETENCES OF NURSES AND MIDWIVES IN SCOPE OF PRESCRIBING MEDICINES, ISSUING PRESCRIPTIONS AND REFERRING PATIENTS FOR DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

Streszczenie w języku angielskim (English summary)

The doctoral thesis entitled: „analysis of the knowledge and attitudes of certain health care professionals regarding expanding competences of nurses and midwives in scope of prescribing medicines, issuing prescriptions and referring patients for diagnostic tests” is a monothematic cycle of publications regarding level of knowledge and analysis of attitudes of different medical stakeholders concerning competences of nurses and midwives to prescribe medicines, issue prescriptions and referrals for diagnostic procedures.

Such rights have been granted to nurses in many countries of Europe and the world since the 1960s, and from 1 January 2016 they were granted to nurses in Poland as well. As a result of the amendment to the Act on the profession of nurse and midwife, representatives of these professions were granted three new powers:

1. A nurse and midwife who has a bachelor's or specialist's degree may issue prescriptions for medication as part of continuing treatment, ordered by a doctor.
2. A nurse and midwife who has a master's or specialist's degree may independently administer medicines containing certain active substances and issue prescriptions for them.
3. A nurse and midwife who has a bachelor's or specialist's degree may refer patients for specific diagnostic tests.

A list of active substances and a list of diagnostic tests is specified in the Regulation of the Minister of Health. Additionally, in order to exercise the rights related to prescribing, an additional specialist course in this field should be completed. This obligation will be abolished for nurses and midwives who acquire these skills during their studies. This means that graduates of nursing or midwifery bachelor studies in 2019 and master studies in 2018 will be exempt

from the obligation to follow such a course, if the university, under which they acquired education in time, implemented revised educational standards in these fields .

As part of a monothematic cycle of publications constituting a doctoral dissertation, the knowledge of nurses, midwives and students of these faculties on the subject of their rights was analyzed. The results of the conducted research indicate that this knowledge is unsatisfactory and needs to be supplemented in all the studied groups. It is not possible to compare the results obtained in different groups directly examined, but the knowledge of the nurses' seems to be more complete than that of the midwife's. For understandable reasons, the level of knowledge of students was the lowest.

Attitudes towards extending professional competences were also analyzed in the group of doctors, nurses, and students representing various fields of study: nursing, midwifery, public health and medicine.

In each of the conducted research, the respondents confirmed the positive impact of the reform and new entitlements of nurses and midwives on the health care system, including increasing access to health care. The respondents were concerned mainly because of the impact of the reform on the profession of nurse and midwife. It was pointed out that this is only an additional responsibility with which no additional remuneration is associated. Doctors and medical students also pointed out that nurses and midwives are not prepared to exercise new rights, or even that they should not have obtained them.

Consideration should be given to undertaking a wide-ranging information campaign on the extended powers of nurses and midwives, especially in the group of nurses who will have the competence to prescribe medicines. Concerns regarding the preparation to perform new entitlements should be verified in practice by the persons concerned using them.

Research on extending the rights of nurses and midwives regarding medicine, prescriptions and referring patients to research should be continued, especially as regards the actual exercise of rights by authorized nurses and midwives.