

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Aim of the project

The aim of the project is to modify the normative model of the physiotherapist-patient relation, taking into account the results of conceptual, axiological and empirical analyses, concerning the values relevant to the ethical identity of a profession of physiotherapist. Particular attention will be paid to analysis of the role of the body, touch, sense of shame, trust and communication in physiotherapeutic practice. The optimal model of the physiotherapist-patient relation should take into account the values recognised as fundamental in the different theoretical models of bioethics and rehabilitation, to respond to the needs of patients and to respect their rights, to take into account the views of physiotherapists on the values relevant to the profession, and to detect and prevent the occurrence of moral problems and value-based conflicts values.

Research carried out under the project

The interdisciplinary research team, consisting of a philosopher, psychologist, sociologist, educationist and physiotherapists, allows bioethical research of a conceptual and empirical nature. Normative and axiological research will focus on a critical analysis of the literature concerning the values relevant to bioethical models in the European and the American cultural settings, as well as the values contained in national and international ethical codes of physiotherapists. They will focus on four key issues: (1) determination of the specific characteristics of the physiotherapist-patient relation, which may be important to determine the values relevant to the ethics of physiotherapist; (2) analysis of the role of compassion / caring values in the ethics of physiotherapist; (3) investigation of the moral relevance of treatment of the body, type of touch and form of communication for the quality of the physiotherapist-patient relation; (4) determination of the place of practical research methodology in normative considerations. Under the project there will also be carried out qualitative and quantitative empirical research on the problem of touch, nonverbal communication, physicality and its perception from the perspective of the patient and physiotherapist. The results of the empirical research will be used to verify the standard model assumptions.

Reasons for the choice of research subject

One of the important dimensions of clinical ethical practice concerns an intimate relation between physiotherapist and the patient, based on trust, touch, which is the basic tool of the physiotherapist, communication and, sometimes, patient dependency. In the literature, there are no works concerning these issues. Research results will contribute to increased knowledge on the moral problems of physiotherapy and determination of ethical identity of the profession of physiotherapist. They can also be used in practice: (1) to modify curricula and training programmes for physiotherapists, and thus lead to improved quality of services; (2) to discuss the amendment of the Code of the Physiotherapist of the Republic of Poland. The adopted in 2015 Physiotherapist Profession Act [2015] imposes on the authorities of physiotherapists a task of establishing principles of professional ethics and caring for its observance, as well as the defence of professional dignity (Art. 62.1).