Abstract

The goal of this thesis, “Psychological and social aspects of healthcare personnel’s work with a dying patient”, is to examine the socially unattractive issue of dying. Despite the fact that dying is a natural process, we often treat it with contempt and concern. We inspect this topic through a prism of healthcare personnel view, who is in contact with dying and death on a daily basis.

In the theoretical part, we have first described the concept of death from historical point of view and afterwards we have narrowed it down to psychological-medical view of dying. Next, we have introduced the area of lenitive care for a dying patient, which is closely related to the topic of euthanasia. Of course, in relation to euthanasia, we then talked about medical ethics. This way we have circled around the relationship between a medic and his patient, the specifics of their communication, and finally we have described the psychological stress of healthcare personnel, possible coping strategies and eventual defensive mechanisms. Bibliography also features current research, both domestic and foreign.

In the empirical part, we have attempted to map and describe psychosocial aspects relevant to working with a dying patient, with emphasis on identifying stress factors and strategies for healthcare personnel to cope with it. In order to do this, we gathered twenty semi-structured interviews with nurses from oncology and long-term care. In those interviews, we focused on perception, experience and attitude of healthcare personnel towards the dying patient, as well as stressful areas and possibilities to manage them.

The conclusion part includes suggestions to help healthcare personnel in their work with a dying patient.

Keywords: dying patient, healthcare personnel, stress factors, coping strategies