POSUDEK DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

Typ posudku: posudek oponenta práce / reviewer

Autor práce: Max Babilon-Crockett

Název práce: The Pharmaceutical Industry in the American Health System

Autor posudku: Martin Dlouhý, VŠE v Praze

The main objective of the thesis is to assess the role of pharmaceutical industry in the US health system. Special attention is paid to the so-called „opioid epidemic“, so the thesis can be understood as a health policy case study.

Chapter 1 – 3 are methodological. Chapter 1 is introductory one. Chapter 2 defines generally the problem and the health care context. In Chapter 3, three research questions are carefully stated regarding the role of pharmaceutical industry in the opioid epidemic. Both qualitative and quantitative data are used, with emphasis on qualitative data methods (content analysis, institutional and critical discourse analyses). The choice of methods is appropriate in this case.

Chapter 4 is empirical and is the key part of the thesis. The work of the author is based on the critical study of literature and some personal interviews. The number of references that the author studied is quite high, including such different sources as company reports on one side, and scientific articles on the other side. It has to be taken into account that the health policy analysis is always complicated as there is a lot of actors with many (hidden) interests. The US health system represents, in comparison with European health systems, the extreme case, so it is not easy for a student to understand all the relations within the health system. The author structured the Chapter according to the research questions in three sub-chapters that are further divided to thematic sections.

The summary of findings is in Conclusions. First, the pharmaceutical industry is seen as an innovator that helps the government to address the problems of public health. Second, the industry is seen as an important ally in combatting the opioid epidemic. Third, regarding opioid epidemic, the physicians and users are blamed as contributors to the epidemic, together with the industry, but the industry is seen as the most progressive actor in finding a solution. Thus it is observed that the industry is an important actor in the US health policy, with positives and negatives, who is able to show above all its positives to the American public. These are main findings of the thesis. In my view, the student could be even more critical.
Of course, the problems of the US health system can be studied even in more detail, but it is far above what can be expected from the master thesis.

Finally, there are no problems in the structure of the work or in formal editing. References are properly cited.

My recommended questions for presentation: Do you think that the characterization of health policy in case of opioid epidemic is a typical situation or rather exceptional situation for the US health system? Do you think that the role of insurers is sufficient in the studied case?

Taking into account the chosen topic, research questions and research methods used, I recommend after my critical assessment of the thesis evaluation “výborně/excellent”.

Prague, 8. 6. 2017

Martin Dlouhý