

This work deals with families whose children suffer from a serious form of epilepsy. On a general level it describes to what extent the condition adversely influences each child's development stage. Then it focuses in detail on the impacts on the child's mental health, as well as on various constraints imposed by this condition. The study also explores the topics of the parent's acceptance, the consequences on the parent's approach to upbringing, capacities for coping with stress and the common ways of families' adaptation to the situation.

The key topic of this study is the impact of the child's illness on the family, which is seen as a system. The essential thesis is that a change of one family component (the sick child) influences the entire system paradigm. Therefore in this sense the functioning and healthiness of a family is for the purposes of this study defined as the ability of a family system to cope with stress and adapt to it.

The family stress coping strategies are seen as a key instrument for a successful adaptation.

Anything a family does for strengthening and using resources for endurance falls under a stress coping strategy. Since one of the possible strategies is the use of professional assistance services, a part of this study also elaborates on possibilities for an expert support provisioning.

The practical part of the study is based on the data collected directly from the families' experiences with their child's disease. The data is analyzed, interpreted and confronted with the theoretical findings. The research confirmed my preliminary presumption, that awareness of possibilities about professional help for families with child suffer of epilepsy is insufficient.