

NEED OF TRAINING IN ERGOTHERAPY FOR SPECIALISTS IN REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

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Introduction: We encounter more often problems of individuals in active age, with permanent neuromuscular and psychological disabilities, which must have assistant in their daily life. The situation calls for well-prepared specialists trained to support a complex rehabilitation, social and economical life of people with disabilities and most of all adaptation of home environment to motor specifics of such people. The purpose of this short scientific article is to specify the need of training of specialists in occupational therapy, for the needs of people with permanent disabilities (both motor and mental). **Conclusion:** Complex knowledge, skills and background that ergotherapists obtain during education process contribute to better medical, social, domestic, psychological, legal and pedagogical services, facilitation of everyday tasks and improved quality of life of patients with special needs.

Keywords: education, professionals, rehabilitation, occupational therapy

Conference participant,
National championship in scientific analytics

Introduction

The dynamic life of people, multiplied traumatism, unceasing industrial failures, natural calamities and military confrontations lead to increased sick rate of muscle and skeleton system diseases worldwide. We encounter more often problems of individuals in active age, with permanent neuromuscular and psychological disabilities, which must have assistant in their daily life [8].

The situation calls for well-prepared specialists trained to support a complex rehabilitation, social and economical life of people with disabilities and most of all adaptation of home environment to motor specifics of such people [6].

Purpose

The purpose of this short scientific article is to specify the need of training of specialists in occupational therapy, for the needs of people with permanent disabilities (both motor and mental).

Material

In the years so far, specialists with educational degree „Professional Bachelor” in „Medical Rehabilitation” have been educated by the Medical Colleges in the country (in Pleven such program



Figure 1.

was opened in 1967 – fig. 1); they are being trained mainly to work with the means of pre-formed physical factors, kinesitherapeutic methods (fig. 2) and various types of healing massage, according to procedures, prescribes by a physician, specialist in physical and rehabilitation medicine [4].

Since 1976, The Medical School in Sofia trained several batches of specialty „Medical Rehabilitator and Occupational Therapist”, who, along with the educational program for the specialty „Rehabilitator”, are being trained to apply the main techniques of functional occupational therapy [1]. It is an active method of treatment that applies occupational activities for healing purposes, consistent with the patient’s individual state, his diagnosis, physical or mental deficit (fig. 3, 4).

Various courses of treatment with

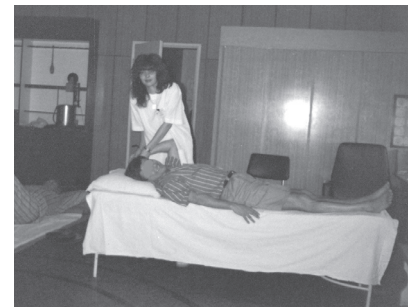


Figure 2.

occupational activities are known, like functional occupational therapy (fig. 5), occupational therapy, diverting the attention (fig. 6), work with children (game therapy) and training in new profession (due to permanent changes in men’s status).

In the past few years the need for specialists with wider skills and knowledge in other aspects of the life of people in unequal situation – social, economical, legal, hygiene, pedagogy, became more and more obvious. In some medical universities in the country has started training in „Occupational Therapy”.

In the Medical University-Pleven, in 2006, started training for the specialty „Medical Rehabilitation and Ergotherapy”, at the Faculty of Public Health. Its duration is 8 semesters; educational degree – „Bachelor”, with option for subsequent training in Master’s Degree program, specialty „Health Care Management, or „Medical Rehabilitation and Ergotherapy”.

Discussion

The curriculum in Ergotherapy is based on the curriculum for Medical Rehabilitator and includes knowledge in fundamental sciences: Anatomy, Physi-

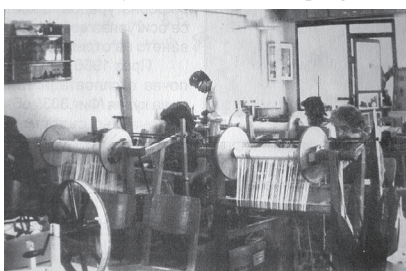


Figure 3.



Figure 4.

ology, Kinesiology, methods and tests for functional evaluation of organs and systems, as well as their pathology sections; major clinic disciplines as Orthopedics and Traumatology, Neurology, Pediatrics, Internal Diseases, Surgery Diseases, Kinesiotherapy, manual techniques, preformed physical factors, ergotherapeutical and pedagogical methods of work [2].

Accumulated fundamental knowledge is supplemented with ergonomics, prosthesis and use of orthosis, auxiliary



Figure 7.

aid for movement (crutches, cane, support chair, wheelchair), equipment and devices, facilitating the everyday life of people with disabilities –toilet and hygiene needs, dressing and putting shoes on, cooking and eating, various domestic and occupational activities [3].

The whole training of such type of specialists requires a serious fundamental theoretical background and significant practical training. The curriculum includes lectures, seminars and clinical practice for trainees conducted at the University Hospital in Pleven.

The lecture course is delivered by habilitated lecturers in scientific disciplines; the seminars are conducted by assistant lecturers and chief assistant lecturers of corresponding departments and the practical training in special subjects is completed as procedures in kinesiotherapy and healing massage by the students.

The clinical practice is connected with immediate work with patients (fig. 7) and severely injured individuals, who

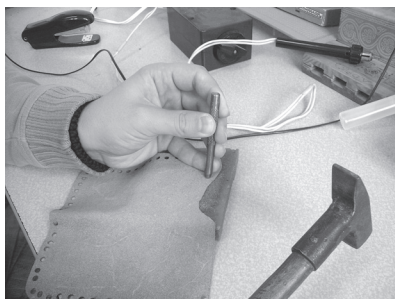


Figure 5.



Figure 6.

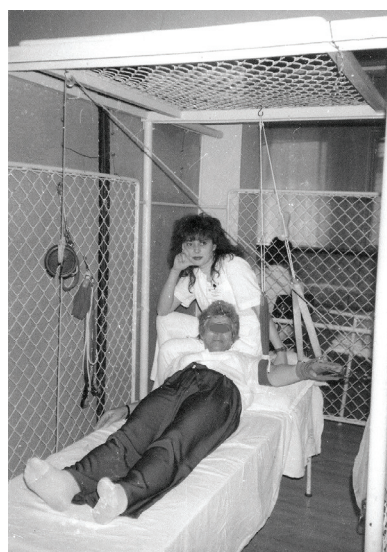


Figure 8.



Figure 9.

later live with these injuries and are called clients of health care. The lecturers in practice are clinic specialists of many years, with rich medical experience at the Clinic of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Medicine, University Hospital, and are highly qualified, with practical knowledge and skills. The practical training and proper mastering of various methods and manual therapeutic techniques, like manual traction and mobilization of peripheral joints, neuro-muscular facilitation, post-isometric relaxation of shortened muscles, the muscle test method, sling suspension (fig. 8) and pull therapy are crucial for

ergotherapy specialists' development and improvement [7].

The time of rapid developments we live in, Bulgaria's membership in the European Union and imposed changes and requirements to our public health system necessitated to educate and train specialists in Medical Rehabilitation and Ergotherapy, who can provide early rehabilitation at paramedical and medical institutions, sanatoria and balneology centres, various social institutions and daycare centres and dispensary for people with disabilities –children (fig. 9, 10) and adults [5].

Conclusion

Complex knowledge, skills and background that ergotherapists obtain during



Figure 10.

education process contribute to better medical, social, domestic, psychological, legal and pedagogical services, facilitation of everyday tasks and improved quality of life of patients with special needs.

Still, the governmental policy related to the problems of people with disabilities, is developed slowly, with reduced financial resources, but based on the WHO's definition of **health** (*a state of physical, psychic and social prosperity*), all possible efforts are being made to improve the life of sick and elderly people, children with inborn and gained motor problems and the psychological and social climate of the society as a whole.

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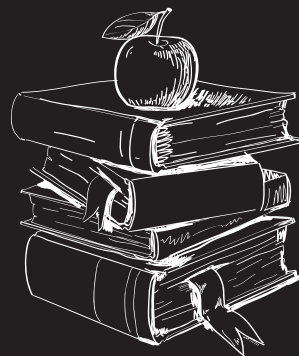
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