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## MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDE OF NURSE STUDENTS FOR WORKING WITH THE ELDERLY AND OLD PEOPLE

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**Abstract:** Elderly people are a vulnerable group in society with specific needs. They are at greater risk of various health problems, financial difficulties, and social isolation. Caring for the elderly benefits not only them but also the entire society. The dedication and care that nursing students demonstrate in their work are critical to meeting the complex challenges of keeping older patients healthy. Motivation is a fundamental element of human behavior and learning. It can be triggered by various factors such as personal goals, interests, aspirations, external stimuli, demands, and rewards. It is important for achieving success and accomplishing our tasks, as it provides energy, direction, and commitment to achieving the desired results. Deciding on a career path is extremely challenging in everyone's life, especially in the nursing profession, where one must choose between working with patients of different age groups and varying health problems and needs. The motivation and attitude of students in the nursing specialty play a key role in their successful realization in working with the elderly.

Purpose of the study: To study and analyze the main reasons for the lack of motivation among students majoring in nursing to work with the elderly.

**Keywords:** motivation, students, elderly care

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The elderly and the old people are a vulnerable group of society that have their own specific needs. They are at greater risk of various health problems, financial difficulties and social isolation. Caring for the elderly and the old people benefits not only them, but also the entire society. It contributes to the preservation of traditions and the values they represent, as well as to the transmission of experience and wisdom to the next generations. To create a better society, we must consider the needs of the elderly and the old people. The pursuit of long-term and quality results in the care of the elderly and the old people requires not only professional skills, but also a high level of motivation and empathy on the part of the medical staff. This process starts already during their training. Plans are needed to raise the awareness of future nurses about specific professional responsibilities and improve their professional performance in all aspects of care (Bijani, M., Tehranineshat, B., & Torabizadeh, C. (2019).

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According to Abrahamseth, one of the reasons that new graduate nurses choose to work with the elderly and old people is due to the expectation of occupying a leadership position (Abrahamsen B. (2019). Studying and analyzing the motivation in caring for the gerontological population from different angles is of paramount importance for ensuring high-quality care for them and for increasing the health and well-being of society as a whole. Bleienberg believes that despite the continuous increase in the number of elderly people, students in the so-called "helping" professions generally do not give much priority to work. With the changing demographics, it is predicted that more and more nursing students will have to work with the elderly even if it is not their preference. This leads to a growing need for motivated medical professionals nurses to care for geriatric patients (Bleijenberg, N., (2012), Sarabia-Cobo, M., & Pfeiffer, C. (2015).is due to the expectation of occupying a leadership position (Abrahamsen B. (2019). Studying and analyzing the motivation in caring for the gerontological population from different angles is of paramount importance for ensuring high-quality care for them and for increasing the health and well-being of society as a whole. Bleienberg believes that despite the continuous increase in the number of elderly people, students in the so-called "helping" professions generally do not give much priority to work With the changing demographics, it is predicted that more and more nursing students will have to work with the elderly even if it is not their preference. This leads to a growing need for motivated medical professionals nurses to care for geriatric patients (Bleijenberg, N., (2012), Sarabia-Cobo, M., & Pfeiffer, C. (2015).

Motivation is the internal or external force that directs behavior, stimulates and sustains a person's efforts to achieve a certain goal or desired result. Motivation is a concept used to describe an external state inspiring a particular behavior and internal responses revealing that behavior (Baljoon, A., Banjar, E., & Banakhar, A. (2018).

Motivation is a fundamental element of human behavior and learning. It can be triggered by various factors such as personal goals, interests, aspirations, external stimuli, demands and rewards. (Díaz-Agea, J.L., et al. 2021). Motivation is important to achieving success and accomplishing our tasks, as it gives us energy, direction and commitment to achieving the desired results. Deciding on a career path is a huge challenge in everyone's life. Multiple factors such as place of residence, economic and educational marital status, remuneration, matching with individual's abilities and interests influence career choice (Alkaya SA, Yaman S, and Simones J.2018) Liu believes that negative attitudes towards the elderly are due to widespread myths about aging. The elderly are perceived as a "burden" on nurses and as a hindrance to the more important task of caring for younger adults (Liu, E., Norman, .J., & While, E. 2013).

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To study and analyze the main reasons for the lack of motivation among students majoring in "Nursing" to work with the elderly and the elderly.

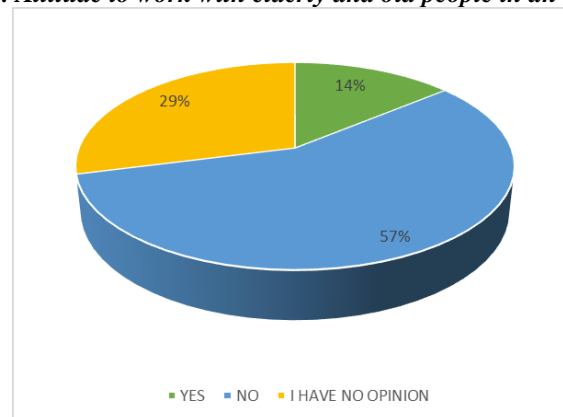
## 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The following methods were used in the research process: survey method, interview, and review of literature sources on the researched problem. The subjects of the research are 126 students from the specialty of "Nursing" in Varna, with affiliates in the city of Sliven, Thrace University in the city of Stara Zagora, and an affiliate in the city of Haskovo, in their third and fourth years . The focus of the study is the attitude and motivation of students to work with elderly people.

## 4. DISCUSSION

A total of 126 nursing students took part in the survey on a voluntary basis, and the results show that more than half 71 (57%) do not want their daily working life to be related to elderly and old people living in nursing homes. There is also a high percentage of students, 36 (29%) who say that at this stage of their studies and life they still do not have an opinion on this matter, and only 18 (14%) express a desire to work with elderly and old people (fig. 1).

*Figure 1. Attitude to work with elderly and old people in an institutional setting*

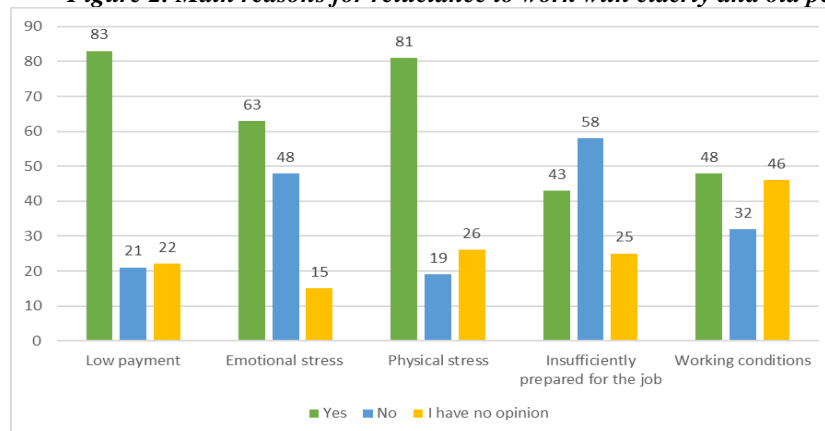


Source: Author research

It turns out that the robe with elderly and old people does not look at all attractive to the future nurses, especially to the younger ones. The average age of the students who gave a positive answer to the question was 36.4 years, and some of them shared that they had already had to take care of elderly people.

To achieve the set goal, I investigated the main reasons that make students define work with elderly and old people as unattractive (Fig.2)

**Figure 2. Main reasons for reluctance to work with elderly and old people**

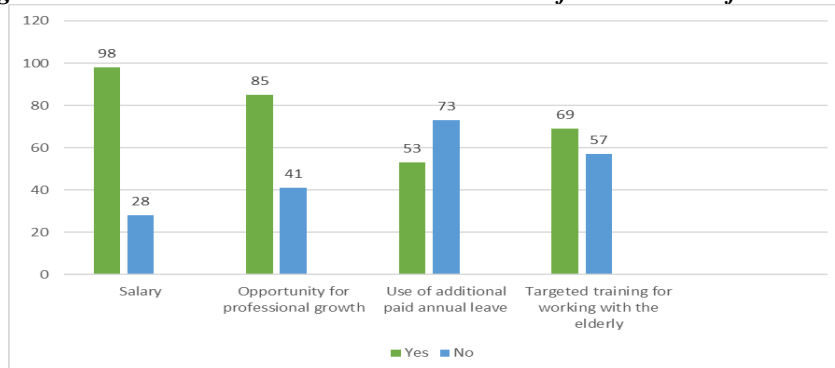


Source: Author research

Low pay is the leading reason for reluctance to work with adults and old people in 83 (65.9%) of the surveyed students, 21 (16.6%) of them do not attach importance to this factor and 22 (17.5%) do not have an opinion on the matter because they are not aware of the pay in this field. Emotional commitment is decisive for 63 (50%) of the surveyed persons and at the same time, 48 (38.1%) do not consider it so important, which shows a diversity in students' priorities. 81 (64.3%) of the respondents consider that working with elderly and old people is related to physical strain, especially when caring for dependent patients and define it as one of the significant reasons for not wanting to practice this profession. Regarding their opinion on whether they feel unprepared for working with old people, it seems that negative answers predominate, i.e. 58 (46%) of them are of the opinion that they have no problem with the theoretical and practical training for working with old people. However, 48 (38%) students expressed doubts about their preparation, indicating that there is some uncertainty among future professionals. The working environment is a determining factor for 48 (38%) of the survey participants and is not important for 46 (36.5%) of them, and 32 (25.4%) have no opinion. This shows that preferences for the work environment are different and highly individual.

With a view to finding a way to provide quality health care for geriatric patients, the main motivational factors for working with the elderly and the elderly through the eyes of future nurses have also been studied. A good salary would motivate 98 (77,8%) of the survey participants to start working with the elderly and the elderly, and not a sufficient motivational factor for 28 (22%) of them. The opportunity for professional development is a strong incentive for 85 of the respondents. This shows that many students are not only looking for financial, but also professional satisfaction and growth. For 41 (32,5%) of them, however, this factor is not enough to motivate them. (Krumova, 2024). Taking additional annual leave is not a significant motivational factor for most of the respondents 73 (57,9%), although 53 (42,1%) of them would take advantage of this opportunity. This shows that extra days off are not a top priority for most students. Targeted training for working with elderly people already during the student years would positively influence the attitude towards working with old people for 69 (54,8%) of them and not important for 57 (45,2%) of the respondents. In other words, not all students attach such importance to learning (fig.3)

**Figure 3. Factors that would increase the motivation for health care for the elderly**



Source: Author research

## 5. RESULTS

The survey among 126 nursing students showed that working with the elderly is unattractive to future nurses. This is confirmed by the fact that more than half (57%) expressed a reluctance to work in homes for the elderly. Based on the conducted research, several trends are outlined.

It is necessary to attract more students and young professionals in the field of health care for the elderly and the elderly. It is important to highlight the advantages and opportunities for professional development and satisfaction in this field, as well as to create strategies to deal with the challenges associated with working in aged care institutions. (Krumova, 2024)

In order to increase the motivation of young nurses to work with geriatric patients, it is necessary to use various motivational factors in combination, such as better pay, additional paid leave, career development opportunities, courses and seminars to increase professional competencies in significant issues in geriatrics, working with standard health care models, and more.

Additionally, it is important to create a supportive work environment that includes mentoring and support from more experienced colleagues, as well as providing resources to deal with stress and emotional exhaustion. Elderly care institutions should invest in modernizing equipment and improving working conditions to make work more attractive and less physically and mentally demanding.

Improving public attitudes towards the profession and increasing awareness of the importance of geriatric care are also essential. Through campaigns and educational initiatives, the important role of nurses in providing quality care for the elderly and the elderly can be highlighted, which can contribute to attracting more young people to this profession.

## 6. CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, we can say that health care for the elderly and old people is a specific type of service that excites society, both in the past and in the present. The urgency of the problem is also supported by the current situation, when we are facing serious challenges related to the aging of the population worldwide and the growing need for care for the elderly and old people, against the background of limited human resources.

The lack of motivation among special "Nursing" students to work with the elderly and old people represents a serious problem for health care and the quality of care in general. It is necessary to direct attention to the attraction and retention of young professionals in this field through support, training and mentoring. It is also necessary to consider the way in which the profession is presented to future students in order to increase their interest and motivation to work with vulnerable groups. It is important to provide appropriate training and working conditions that support the development and professional growth of young nurses so that they can perform their tasks with greater pleasure and efficiency.

The nursing profession is constantly changing and becoming increasingly complex under the influence of various factors, such as the continuous development of science and technology, changes in the nature of diseases, the aging of the population, and others. On the other hand, nursing shortages can further complicate the process of addressing these challenges. (Morley et al., (2020); Chen, Q., et al., (2021)) There is an urgent need to adapt health services to demographic changes, with an emphasis on training more specialists in geriatrics, reducing institutionalism and stimulating creating alternative forms of ambulatory and home care for the elderly (Rathnayake, S., Athukorala, Y., & Siop, S. (2016); Sarabia-Cobo, M., & Pfeiffer, C. (2015)).

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