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The conviction of self-efficacy and midwives' education

Przekonanie o własnej skuteczności a kształcenie w zawodzie położnej

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Słowa kluczowe: przekonanie o własnej skuteczności, kształcenie, położna

Abstract

The interest in scientific research of the self-efficacy phenomenon provides new data and reveals further relationships between this phenomenon and the functioning of the individual in the society. The Albert Bandura's socio-cognitive theory presents its important and the most popular theoretical construct - self-efficacy, which is a part of the cognitive components of personality. It is an assessment of the individual's competences, its conviction about the possibility of managing planned activities in a given field. Studies on the relationship between coping with the learning process and self-efficacy seem to be particularly interesting. In the analysis of the problem, there are a number of personality variables that could be important for undertaking and continuing education and training in adulthood, which is particularly important among people performing medical professions, including midwives. Motivation,

conscientiousness, conviction about self-efficacy or cognitive abilities are mentioned in literature of the subject.

Streszczenie

Zainteresowanie w badaniach naukowych zjawiskiem poczucia własnej skuteczności dostarcza nowych danych i odsłania kolejne zależności występujące pomiędzy tym zjawiskiem a funkcjonowaniem jednostki w społeczeństwie. Społeczno-poznawcza teoria Alberta Bandury przedstawia jej ważny i najpopularniejszy konstrukt teoretyczny – poczucie własnej skuteczności (self-efficacy), którą zalicza się do poznawczych składników osobowości. Jest to ocena kompetencji jednostki, jej przekonanie o możliwości przeprowadzenia zaplanowanych działań w danej dziedzinie. Szczególnie interesującymi wydają się być badania poświęcone relacjom pomiędzy radzeniem sobie w procesie kształcenia a poczuciem własnej skuteczności. W analizach dotyczących problemu wskazuje się na szereg zmiennych osobowościowych, które mogą mieć znaczenie dla podejmowania i kontynuowania edukacji oraz szkoleń w wieku dorosłym, co jest szczególnie ważne wśród osób wykonujących zawody medyczne, w tym – wśród położnych. Wymienia się tu między innymi motywację, sumienność, przekonanie o własnej skuteczności czy zdolności poznawcze.

Introduction

The challenges posed to health care workers are dictated by the political and economic changes of recent years, growing health needs of the society and patients' requirements, as well as increasing competition in the medical services market. The lifelong learning of medical staff plays a huge role in fulfilling these requirements. After graduation they have the opportunity to participate in various forms of post-graduate education, ie. in qualification and specialist courses as well as specialization or post-graduate courses. The conviction of effectiveness is an important issue in the context of health care workers' education and career development [1, 2].

The aim of the study

The aim of the study is to present the theoretical assumptions of the construct, which is the sense of self-efficacy and the possibility of its implications in the midwives' education process.

Literature review

Midwives training in Poland takes place in the higher education system on the basis of the provisions of the Act of 27 July 2005 Law on Higher Education and the Act of July 15,

2011 on Nurse and Midwife Professions, based on the standards of education in midwifery [3-5]. The education has been adapted to the education systems obligatory in countries that are members of the European Union. The provisions of European and national legislation, the wide range of services provided by midwives and the increasing patients' and their families' requirements, are undoubtedly reasons for continuous training. Midwives have the right and duty to lifelong learning, and the opportunity to constantly update their knowledge and professional skills by postgraduate education, which is regulated by the Act of 15 July 2011 on nurse and midwife profession [5-8].

The education of midwives is directed at developing their professional competences. Such trained personnel have the ability to meet the current health needs of the society and the ability to safely and effectively perform the profession. The key to such training is:

- professional training in accordance with the experience-based education program,
- teachers' preparation to practical teaching
- adult education
- conducting quality and evaluation control of education, accreditation of higher education institutions which educate midwives [9, 10].

The education of midwives addresses issues of approaching community-oriented services, which means that midwifery services are comprehensive, continuous, ethical, safe and sustainable. Moreover, midwives meet the needs of individuals in the field of health services. The priority in midwives' education is conduction of such education, which will ensure patients' access to qualified and competent specialists, in accordance with changing health needs. This could be achieved by strengthening continuous professional and career development [11].

The range of services provided by midwives is very wide. The tasks completed by them in an interdisciplinary team require, among others, effectiveness, but also expressiveness, responsibility and creativity. Moreover midwives' functions commit them to update and develop their knowledge and skills. It is therefore necessary for midwives to undertake continuous lifelong learning [12, 13].

The issue of self-efficacy is an important issue in the context of education and career development. Self-efficacy is one of the cognitive components of the personality. It is described as an individual's belief in own ability to control events, as well as faith in the potential to motivate oneself, mobilize oneself to take action and behave properly to achieve the intended goal [1, 14-22].

Human activity is usually preceded by contemplating and emotions, thanks to which the goals and standards of action are determined. Thinking and emotions accompanying the action are the basis for its continuation, implementation of changes or making a decision on its completion. Self-efficacy has a strong influence on thinking, emotions and on the action itself. It is the individual's conviction that he/she could cope with the conditions of task, with a certain degree of difficulty, thus leading to its effective implementation [14, 15, 22, 23].

The sense of self-efficacy is a factor which influence person's well-being and success. A high level of self-efficacy affects high self-esteem, self-acceptance and optimistic attitude. It determines the action in which individual chooses the kind of aspirations in which he/she could succeed, and eliminates goals for that he/she has the conviction that they will end in failure. It influences the effort in making personal choices and shapes the sense of internal control, which consists in perceiving the connection between actions and the effects of this activity [1, 14, 23, 24].

It is believed that people with a high level of self-efficacy set more difficult goals, devote more effort, have a higher level of self-acceptance and show resistance in the face of adversity. It seems to be extremely important in conducting lifelong learning among midwives, who often undertake education at the expense of many sacrifices, such as time devoted to the family or their own vacation. When making the decision to start and continue the training, the importance of the self-efficacy is important, which affects the perseverance in action, that is, the completion of the action taken with a positive effect. The sense of internal control shaped by our own effectiveness affects the high level of commitment to achieving the planned goals, independence of opinions, better coping with difficult situations and lowering the level of anxiety [16].

Bandura described four basic factors that shape the sense of self-efficacy. The first is experience, or real achievements, which provide the individual with awareness about its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, talents and limitations. The intensification of self-efficacy among midwifery students as well as midwives might occur as a result of experiencing many difficult situations that they have to face in the education process as well as at work, through a constant effort which help them coping with problems [1, 14, 26, 27].

The another factor is social modeling, which is strongly dependent on the perception of similarity to model people, in this case - the observation of positive role models, eg teachers, other midwives. It is the analysis of the similar people's achievements. Their success allows observers to believe that they also have such abilities. Lowering the sense of self-efficacy,

despite the efforts that were put, follows by the experiencing the failures of these people [1, 14, 26, 27].

The third factor shaping the sense of self-efficacy is social persuasion, or the conviction about the self-efficacy of people from the lips the community in which it functions. An individual who is supported by the environment and confirmed in the conviction of his /her ability to cope with all kinds of activities, shows greater willingness and puts more effort in pursuing the set goal. In the process of education, lectures, positive opinions during classes or practical classes play an important role, encouragement for further work and development. This conviction of self-efficacy motivates a person to make efforts in planning goals and achievements [1, 14, 25-27].

The final factor presented by Bandura is emotional excitation. It is the body's response with a certain level of self-efficacy in a given situation. The positive mood increases the sense of self-efficacy, while the bad mood reduces this feeling. In the education process, the sense of self-efficacy will increase along with the ability to minimize stress, the tendency to feel negative emotions and avoidance of unfavorable presentation of personal states and moods [1, 14, 25-27].

At the level of higher education, the learning process is inherently accompanied by stress associated with examinations which check the acquired students' knowledge and skills. During this time, students undertake activities which help them developing their knowledge and skills intensify their interests. During learning, achievements are obtained in the form of positive learning outcomes. Depending on the stage of learning, various activities are undertaken, not only active participation in various forms of classes, but also the publication of research articles , participation in various types of research projects or the dissemination of papers at scientific conferences. At that time, the individual's trust in one's own abilities and belief in one's own strength and vision of achieving success in a career are important [25, 28].

Success in these difficult situations depends not only on the time that a student devoted to learning or from its intellectual level, but also from the ability to control emotions, mobilize, hope for positive completion of examinations and conviction about own effectiveness. It could be concluded that, just as the results of exams are different, the beliefs about self-efficacy among students and midwives who are learning will be different. Insights about self-efficacy indicate that this is an important determinant of learning outcomes. It is a factor that has a strong influence on which choices the student makes, what goals he or she sets up, and whether he/she persistently realize them [1, 29].

Self-efficacy has an impact on stress. The conviction of controlling the situation reduces the level of perceived stress. Studies show that people who have low self-efficacy experience much more stress than people who believe in their potential. These results allow to define people who work as midwives as believing in their own abilities and convinced of their own effectiveness. Indirectly, the study allow to believe that they have predispositions to be active in the process of lifelong learning [30].

High self-efficacy foster fast processing of information, better executing and implementing of assigned tasks, formulating goals and achieving successes in the education process. Positive results assume an increase in self-efficacy, which means that this process operate on the basis of feedback [29].

In the long-term perspective related to a professional career, a high level of self-efficacy affects the satisfaction of professional life, prevents burnout syndrome and lowering the sense of personal achievement. It is a factor protecting against excessive feeling of occupational stress, which provides peace of mind and mental health for proper functioning in the workplace [15]. Kiamarsia and Abolghasemib (2013) suggest that students who have achieved a high level of self-efficacy have positive qualities such as logical thinking, ability to communicate properly and initiate positive interpersonal contacts, responsible behavior or emotional stability. Therefore, they positively assess their skills and abilities in the scope of performing specific activities [16, 31].

It is commonly known that a high level of self-efficacy works proactively against emotional exhaustion. It guarantees satisfaction with the work performed, and thus counteracts burnout syndrome, depersonalization and reduction the faith in success [15].

A low level of self-efficacy is associated with anxiety, low level of emotional stability, a sense of helplessness, sadness and depression, a pessimistic vision of the future or constructing unrealistic goals, replacing real opportunities with wishful thinking [16, 24].

The Tomczak's research conducted among students (2009) indicates that during the education, help in building a realistic self-image based on previous successes and failures is recommended, as it helps building self-confidence. Tomczak claims that it is very important to show the individual the specific ways of coping with a stressful situation and enhance conviction about effectiveness [1].

Summary

In conclusion, it should be clearly stated that conviction about midwives' self-efficacy is an indispensable value in their professional career. The conviction is an important element of the

education process, because it reflects the conviction of students and already working midwives and their confidence in their own ability to satisfy the behaviors they expect from themselves and their employers. Self-efficacy gives the feeling of acting at a level that determines life satisfaction, a sense of security and lack of fear of making commitments and creating long lasting emotional professional relations. It gives a sense of full, responsible adulthood and control in the perspective of time, openness and readiness for necessary changes in the course of a professional career. Therefore, it seems important to conduct trainings that build the conviction of self-efficacy especially in groups with low level of that sense[24].

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