

Wybrane aspekty podnoszenia kwalifikacji zawodowych w opinii ratowników medycznych

(Selected aspects of extending professional qualifications as perceived by medical rescue workers)

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Streszczenie - Wstęp. Ratownicy medyczni z racji specyfiki wykonywanego zawodu winni posiadać aktualną wiedzę z zakresu medycyny ratunkowej oraz umieć ją wykorzystać wobec pacjenta znajdującego się w stanie nagłego zagrożenia życia.

Cel pracy. Celem pracy była próba określenia wiedzy oraz zainteresowania ratowników medycznych problemem doskonalenia zawodowego, w tym wytypowanie zarówno czynników motywacyjnych do podejmowania doskonalenia zawodowego, jak też przeszkód.

Materiał i metody. W badaniach ankietowych uczestniczyło 158 ratowników medycznych. Wyniki. 68% ankietowanych posiada wiedzę na temat długości okresu edukacyjnego rozliczeniowego, zaś 48% osób wie ile w trakcie tego okresu należy uzyskać punktów edukacyjnych. Dla 48% osób, kurs doskonalący to optymalna forma doskonalenia zawodowego, 81% wskazuje na istnienie przeszkód w podnoszeniu kwalifikacji, za główną uznano brak oddelegowania z pracy na taki kurs. Dla 82,2% badanych głównym motywatorem doskonalenia jest wzrost satysfakcji z pracy.

Wnioski. W badanym materiale ratownicy medyczni nie posiadają dostatecznej wiedzy z zakresu warunków doskonalenia zawodowego ratownika medycznego. Preferowaną formą doskonalenia zawodowego są kursy doskonalące, zaś głównym źródłem wiedzy o doskonaleniu jest internet. Największym motywatorem do doskonalenia zawodowego jest wzrost satysfakcji z pracy, zaś największym demotywatorem brak wzrostu wynagrodzenia.

Słowa kluczowe - doskonalenie zawodowe, ratownik medyczny, wiedza, szkolenia.

Abstract - Introduction. Medical rescue workers should, due to the character of their profession, possess updated knowledge on rescue medicine and know how to put it into use in the cases of patients whose lives are in jeopardy.

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The purpose of the paper. The purpose of the study was to attempt to define the necessary knowledge and to interest medical rescue workers in the matter of professional development, including pointing out both motivational factors for self-improvement and obstacle on its way.

The material and methods. The survey research included 158 medical rescue workers. The results. 68% of the interviewees had knowledge of the duration of education clearing period, whereas 48% of the responders knew how many education one is obliged to get during that period. For 48% of the participants a professional course is an optimal form of training. 81% of responders indicated the existence of some obstacles to professional development – the predominant one was a failure to assign a worker for such a course on the part of the employer. For 82,2% of the interviewees, the main motivation to extend their qualifications was an improvement in the work-related contentment level.

Conclusions. The medical rescue workers in the material under investigation had insufficient knowledge on the conditions of professional education. The preferred form of professional development were training courses, whereas the main source of knowledge on the development concerned was the Internet. The most significant motivational factor was an increase in the satisfaction with work, whereas the most common factor responsible for decreasing motivation was related to the lack of pay rise.

Key words - professional improvement, medical rescue worker, knowledge, courses and training.

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Medical Rescue Act of September 8th, 2006 provided legal framework for a new medical profession – medical rescue workers [1,2]. As medical rescue workers provide service within both ambulance teams and hospital emergency rooms, vast and updated knowledge on life-threatening conditions is expected of them [1].

The procedures in case of emergency are constantly updated because of the continuous research. The indication of that are the guidelines of the two world's greatest scientific associa-

tions dealing with the matter of providing care in cases of sudden health hazard, namely the European Resuscitation Council and the American Heart Association. These organizations publish updated guidelines for procedures in emergency every five years. [3-9]. The general progress of health science and medical engineering as well as changing standards of proceedings in health emergency impose a need for constant development and updating knowledge upon medical rescue workers. What is more, in the decree of June 14, 2007 (based on Article 12, Paragraph 2 of the National Medical Rescue Act) it is legally stated that medical rescue workers are to develop their professional skills. Forms, means and range of that development is specified there [10].

Unfortunately, the literature of the field undertakes the issue of medical rescue workers' professional development (including beneficial and disadvantageous factors affecting it) very infrequently. Because of this theoretical vacancy, the authors decided to undertake their own research.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted in the group of 158 medical rescue workers employed in Mazowieckie and Łódzkie provinces. The age of the interviewees varied between 22 and 42 (the mean being $28,44 \pm 5,31$). The average age of men (29,3) was statistically insignificantly higher than that of women (27,8 lat).

The vast majority of the responders (74%) lived in a city or town. 60% of them had post-secondary education, while 39,2% completed undergraduate studies (B.Sc.).

All of the interviewed were professionally active, 65% of them having 1 to 5 years of experience in the field and the rest of them (35%) – over 5 years.

In the group of medical rescue workers, 74% worked in ambulance medical rescue teams while 26% were hospital emergency rescue workers.

The research tool was a self-developed questionnaire consisting of 8 questions pertaining to professional development of medical rescue workers. The research was conducted between October 1 and December 31, 2011.

Statistical analysis

The research material was coded in Microsoft Excel and analysed using the STATISTICA 8.0 software package. The normality of the distribution of variables was tested using significance level p for the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. If the distribution was normal the mean difference was tested by Stu-

dent's t-test. Results were considered statistically significant if $p < 0,05$.

III. RESULTS

The first question tested medical rescue worker's knowledge of the length of clearing period for continuing education of medical rescue staff. Only 68% of the responders were aware what the period in which they were obliged to collect the required amount of educational points was. The other 32% had no such knowledge.

Question 2 was also directly related to the continuing education of medical rescue staff. The interviewees were supposed to indicate the number of educational points they were required to obtain during a clearing period. No more than 48% of them knew the correct amount of 200.

The interviewees were asked to indicate the form of education that is the most popular with them. The most frequent answer was professional courses (48%), followed by undergraduate studies (32%) as well as seminars and conferences related to emergency medicine (20%). Figure 1 presents the answers offered by the responders.

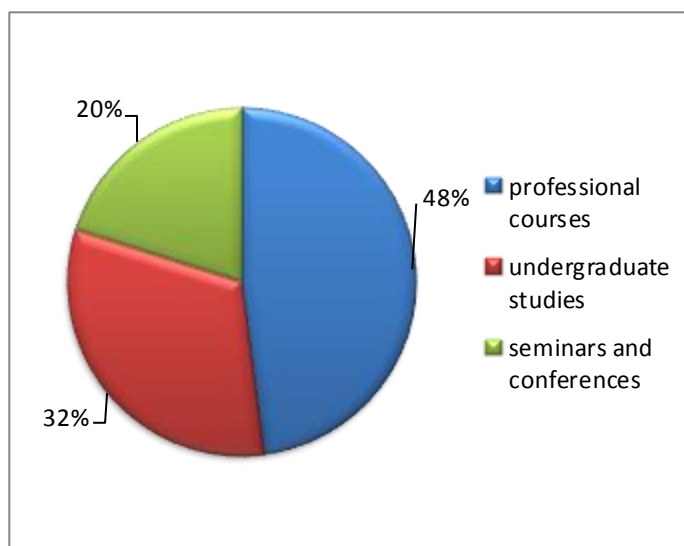


Fig. 1 The form of professional knowledge updating declared by medical rescue staff

The next question required the interviewed to point to the reasons they had for professional development. The strongest motivation was to increase the level of satisfaction with their own work, followed by widening the possibilities of employment. The least popular one was the pay rise related to upgrading one's qualifications. The distribution of the responders' answers is presented in fig. 2.

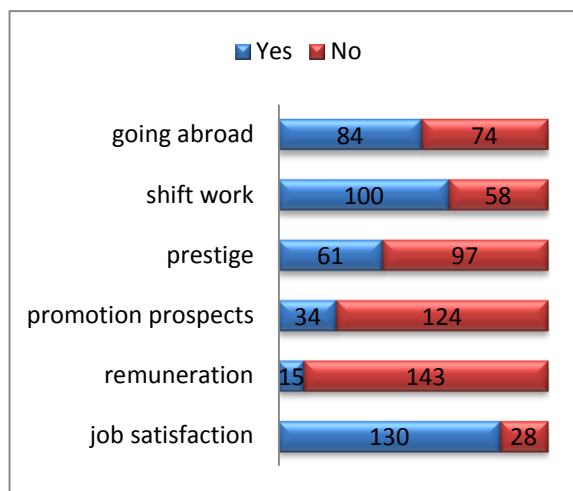


Fig. 2 Motivations to increase professional qualifications

The implementation of continuing education requires accessing information on the forms of education. Therefore, the responders were asked where their knowledge on the forms of education came from. Fewer than a half of the interviewed (45%) pointed to the Internet as the main source of their knowledge. That was followed by talking to colleagues (27%). The fewest rescue workers claimed they had their knowledge on forms of education from their superordinates (3%). The detailed account of the responses is presented in fig. 3.

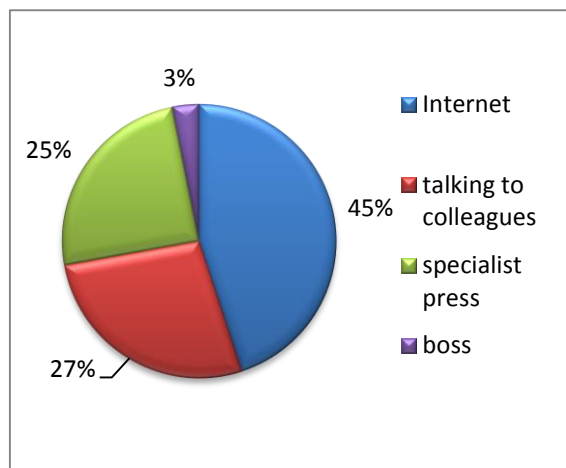


Fig. 3 The sources of knowledge on professional development

Another question the group under research were asked was whether there were any obstacles that prevented them from developing professionally. 81% of the group claimed to encounter interferences like that, while 19% saw no impediments to professional education.

128 interviewees who declared there were obstacles that made development impossible were additionally asked to identify them. The most significant problem, according to the re-

sponders, was no employee secondment for a course, conference of classes on part of the employer, which triggered the problem of unauthorised absence from work (53%). Also often indicated were: problems related to financing the training (31%), no information (13%) and transport to the location of a course (3%). Figure 4 presents the distribution of responses to this question.

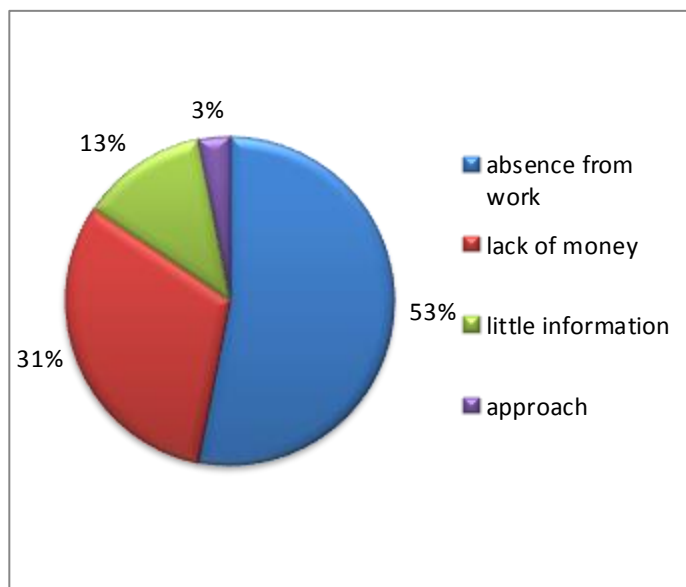


Fig. 4 Answers to the question what the obstacles that hindered development were.

IV. DISCUSSION

Due to the fact that professional literature neglects the information on the conditions of medical rescue staff professional development, it is impossible to compare the results of our research with others.

The issues related to professional development of medical rescue staff were regulated by the Minister of Health decree of June 14, 2007 pertaining to the professional development of rescue staff [10]. The development and broadening of knowledge as defined by the aforementioned decree includes the following range of topics: medical rescue system in Poland and other countries, the system of emergency call, the issues of communication and cooperation with the partner organizations of the National Medical Emergency System, the rules of involving the Polish Medical Air Rescue, the issues of emergency conditions pharmacotherapy, medical rescue procedures (as described by the National Medical Rescue Act, it is medical care as defined in the regulations of publically financed

healthcare provided outside hospital by a system unit defined in Article 32, Paragraph 1, point 2, in order to save a person whose health is in danger as a result of emergency) as well as providing mental support to both medical rescue workers and patients [10].

The decree includes courses, seminars and self-study among the forms of medical rescue staff professional development [1,10]. Unfortunately, in the group under research nobody pointed to self-study as a form of professional development. The majority of the responders (51%) stated they would be most willing to participate in professional courses. Controversially enough, educational points for medical books or medical journal subscriptions were not included among the forms of self-study. It has to be stated that points for these are accepted in the case of development of doctors and pharmacists.

The decree discussed here takes into account professional development as divided into five-year periods [10]. The clearing periods begin on January 1 of the year following one's graduation from an institution educating future medical rescue workers. The first period, in the course of which a medical rescue worker is obliged to obtain 200 educational points, began on January 1, 2008. The material under investigation presented negligible level of knowledge on the expectations of the education period in professional development. Only 68% of the interviewees were aware that such a period was 5-year-long, while even fewer (48%) of them knew how many points they are expected to obtain within such a period. In order to verify their professional progress, medical rescue staff are obliged to record their professional development in a personal development sheet [1,10]. This document is issued at a medical rescue worker's request by the proper subject authorized to do so by the provincial governor.

A key element that requires testing is the motivation of medical rescue staff to extend their qualifications [4]. Among the responses offered by the interviewees, the higher level of satisfaction with one's own work was the most common motivation. It was followed by better employment opportunities. A high percentage of the responders also indicated that going to work abroad is easier if you have additional, certified knowledge. As the interviewees indicated, employers fail to motivate or take interest in the development of the staff, as extending one's qualifications is not synonymous with higher salary. Workers are discouraged by it. Our research points out that a vast majority of medical rescue workers encounter obstacles that prevent them from expanding in professional terms. The most significant problem is posed by the need to excuse one's absence from work, as the employers are generally not interested in seconding their staff to participate in courses or seminars. Another impediment is related to fees for professional training. The decree of medical rescue staff development does not specify which party is to pay for the training

of rescue workers. Neither employers nor employees are legally obliged to finance it. Maybe those expenses could be shared by both? The authors find this option most appealing. For 31% of the studied group, costs of training are a serious problem.

As employers take no interest in their employees' (medical rescue workers') professional development, the staff are not informed about possible forms of extending their qualifications. As we have managed to establish, such a situation appears to be commonplace. Only 3% of the responders claimed to have been informed by their employers about forms and ways of professional development, including, for instance, dates and subjects of medical conferences and seminars. The predominant source of medical rescue workers' knowledge on professional development is the Internet.

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. Medical rescue workers have insufficient knowledge on the conditions of the required professional development in their field.
2. The preferred form of professional development are courses and the main source of knowledge on the development is the Internet.
3. The most significant motivation for professional development is higher level of satisfaction with one's own work, whereas no increase in salary is the most discouraging factor.

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