

Family – Health – Disease. Preface

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The family is the basic social cell and a person's closest environment; it plays the dominant non-medical role in shaping health as it is the primary source of knowledge about nutrition, life-style and disease prevention. The family may determine both healthy habits and anti-health behaviors; it influences the entire duration of a person's life. It is important to emphasize the extremely significant role of the family in providing care, supporting treatment processes, and giving company to an ill family member.

However, transferring most of the responsibility for the health of sick person from medical care professionals to the family means that disease not only affects the sick person but may also lead to an increased burden for caregiving family members. As a consequence, the burnout of caregivers prevents effective treatment of the patient or even makes it impossible; moreover, the quality of the caregiver's life decreases.

Chapter One, by Agnieszka Fusińska-Korpik, provides scientific reflection on the consequences of caring for caregiving relatives of patients with schizophrenia and ways of holistically supporting patients and their families.

Issues concerning the carer's burden are also addressed in Chapter Two, by Agnieszka Skorupska-Król, Paulina Kurleto and Grażyna Dębska,

who describe selected types of support and their importance for the quality of life of caregivers of people after ischemic stroke.

In Chapter Three, Leszek Pawłowski and Jakub Bil discuss the extremely important social topic of the currently emerging possibilities of effective prevention of suicide. The authors not only emphasize the determinants of this phenomenon (motives for suicide and individual and environmental risk factors) but also indicate the remedies included in specific programs which open new possibilities for saving human lives.

In Chapter Four, Renata Bajcarczyk, Renta Florek and Dorota Koziel describe teenagers' and their mothers' knowledge about cervical cancer prevention and HPV vaccines. As the mother-daughter relationship is one of the closest, it seems to play a key role in the maintenance and development of the female reproductive health of daughters. As the primary prevention of cervical cancer is based on education and vaccination of young girls, this issue should be also addressed to their mothers.

In Chapter Five, Joanna Witkoś describes the opinions of final-year medical students concerning the stages of life and age of women that are predisposed to stress urinary incontinence. The advanced aging of societies is an emerging problem which challenges healthcare professionals as well as family members. Urinary incontinence is currently one of the most widespread medical problems and has a real influence on the daily lives of millions of women.

In Chapter Six, Małgorzata Kalemba-Drożdż with Agata Grzywacz Kisielewska and Joanna Kin-Dąbrowska consider if vegetarian, vegan or non-meat-excluding diets may affect the content of heavy metals, dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls in human milk. Natural feeding represents a newborn baby's first relationship and is an opportunity to form healthy eating habits for both mother and child. The results of the research suggest that high food diversity can protect against the accumulation of anthropogenic toxins.

We hope that the book will be a source of knowledge for students of medicine disciplines, health care professionals, researchers dealing with health and disease issues in the context of the family, as well as decision-makers responsible for health policy.