Conception for building up a multidisciplinary team as educational technology

Todorka Stefanova*, Sasho Nunev, Boryana Todorova, Ivanichka Serbezova, Despina Georgieva, Kristina Zaharieva, Kina Velcheva

Ruse University “Angel Kanchev”, 8 Studentska str., Ruse 7017, Bulgaria

Abstract

Problem Statement: Contemporary European trends are using multidisciplinary teams for medical, health and social activities.
Purpose of Study: Multidisciplinary team in education for the following programmes: Nurse. Physiotherapy, Social activities, Midwifery to be built up. Methods: work in a virtual laboratory and interactive learning environment. Findings and Results: development of common educational modules in the curriculum for different majors, presentations for educational simulations. Conclusion: The educational technology found on training in multidisciplinary teams is very useful for professional competences.

Keywords: Multidisciplinary team; social and health services; educational technology; virtual laboratory; interactive learning environment

1. European policies on the integration of social and health services

Distinctive policies within the European Union are the ones related to the use of models of integrated social services. They present trends and practices for integration of social and health services depending on the specificity and complexity of the problems and needs of vulnerable groups [Munday, B., 2007]. The underlying concept is directed towards increasing the quality of life of the users.

1.1 European approach to services for children and families

The European approach to services for children and families, presented in the report commissioned by CfBT Education Trust, 2010 (An international perspective on integrated children’s services) requires building and implementing a coherent policy to ensure integration of services in key areas. It extends the scope of intervention and aspects of support and focuses on protecting and improving user welfare. A survey conducted in 54 EU and non-EU countries, found that political decisions and steps to provide integrated services for children had been undertaken in 34 of them.
1.2 European policies on families at all levels

Within the context of the economic crisis, social exclusion and unemployment in families in April 2010 the Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union presented the Memorandum "Better families, better society". Its major policy commitment to families at all levels within the European Union is related to meeting the needs for affordable and quality social, health and other services in the event of unemployment, poverty, disease, disability, etc. Within the Memorandum there was a proposal to designate the year 2012 as the Year for Active Ageing and solidarity between generations, which was confirmed by the European Commission and required a new political approach of local authorities.

1.3 Policies on sustainable integration of social and health services supporting ageing population and vulnerable group

These policies are justified by the PROCARE pilot project carried out in nine European countries, co-funded by the Council of Europe under the Fifth Framework Quality of Life and Management of Living Resources Programme. Key Action 6 "Ageing population and disabilities" [Leichsenring, K., 2004]. They demonstrate a tendency towards sustainable integration of social and health services supporting ageing population and vulnerable groups.

1.4 Policies to extend the scope of the integrated social and health services

The integration of social and health services ensuring human welfare becomes a political question of present interest in many European countries. This is expressed through new legislation, research projects, European conferences and information on integration initiatives. Integrated services are also necessary for solving problems related to gender, age, disability, disease, violence, trafficking, education, etc., outlined as some of the worst problems of modern society and subject of activity of the social activities system [CDCS, 2006].

2. Policies in social and health services in Bulgaria - restructuring and giving them modern European appearance

Priorities in the Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007 - 2013, and in the Regional development strategies for social services, presenting the government policy on social services within the period to 2016 are oriented towards integration of social and health services and identify:

2.1. Deinstitutionalization of children with or without disabilities institutionalized in specialized institutions (Childhood for everyone project - 2014).

This policy is implemented through preparatory assessment work of children, staff, facilities and making a map of the services, closing and creating new social and health services for children and families.

2.2. Reorganization and transformation of specialized institutions for adults with disabilities, mental disorders and dementia

This policy is consistent with the Plan for reform on specialized institutions for adults with disabilities, 2010-2011 and aims to improve the quality of services and to de-institutionalize and provide social services within the community.

2.3. Establishing innovative social services for targeted groups of adults and children from vulnerable groups with risk behaviour.

This policy within the context of the multidisciplinary approach is reflected in the following major institutional forms: crisis centres for victims of human trafficking, violence, etc.; centres and services for children and persons...
with addictions; Centres and family planning and prevention of unwanted pregnancy programmes; inter-sectoral health and social services for children's mental health, which operates within the town of Ruse; health and social services for HIV/AIDS prevention and referring to treatment, hospices etc. The rendered services are characterized by dominance of the clinical component and their implementation requires an integrated approach.

2.4. Effective support to prevent premature institutionalization of persons with disabilities and elderly people

The policy focuses on the development of integrated social and health services within the community- with an emphasis on the creation of mobile services networks. Along with community-based services in smaller municipalities some resident services have been envisaged through reconstruction of homes and creating new ones with small capacity.

2.5. Development of innovative services for closing the way to the institutions

The concept of Gatekeeping is underlying in this policy. It aims at keeping children in their families, improving the care for disabled children in family environment.

2.6. Some current emphasis of the health policy of the Republic of Bulgaria in the context of multidisciplinarity

A regulation by the Ministry of Health in 2011 [Provision No 1, 2011] defines the professional activities of nurses and midwives, associated medical professionals and healthcare assistants to be carried out by appointment or on their own. It integrates them into good medical practices in Europe with a clear regulation and role in the multidisciplinary team. The involvement of nurses and midwives in a multidisciplinary team is established in both outpatient and inpatient care.

3. Imperatives for higher education and multidisciplinarity as an approach in education in majors within the professional fields of Public Health, Health Care and Social Activities in the University of Ruse "Angel Kanchev"

3.1. Relevance of policies in the field of healthcare and social services and multidisciplinary approach to education

The implementation of the policies presented and the use of a multidisciplinary approach require increased human resource capacity of the healthcare and social services system. This suggests an accelerated investment in appropriate education and qualification programmes, including a significant interdisciplinary component, continuing education system and supervision. In the context of the anti-discrimination policies at European and national level there is a focus on the formation of expert competences for identifying behaviours, systems, policies and practices characterized by discrimination, and demonstration of sensitivity to the culture of users and colleagues [Nunev, 2009]. This is seen as an important prerequisite and an element of the multidisciplinary approach to education and practice.

3.2. Drafting educational documentation and technique

In connection with the implementation of the European and national policies for integrated health and social services and the Strategy of the Faculty of Public Health at the University of Ruse the team conducted an empirical study. A inquiry was carried out among 60 users of the service "Social assistant". It showed that 45% of respondents highlighted the need of a medical specialist in the team of social workers providing services to them [Georgieva, D., Kr. Zaharieva, 2011]. A study under the scientific advisory of Dr. S. Nunev was carried out on the method of expert valuations in 6 Regional Directorates for Social Assistance in the North Central and North-east areas of planning and 9 social service providers from the region of Ruse. The expertise established a need to align the education of
students in majors Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Medical nurse, Midwifery and Social Activities to an accelerated introduction of integrated healthcare and social services and the establishment of multidisciplinary teams. The study on the practices of leading medical universities showed an emphasis on interactive education technologies through simulation in the training of multidisciplinary teams [Serbezova, I., T. Stefanova, 2011]. The educational documentation for majors in the Faculty of Public Health was drafted based on the cited empirical study. The curricula are consistent with the said needs of multidisciplinary teams for professional practices and career development. They are formed by module courses reflecting the requirements for integrity of social and healthcare services and multidisciplinarity. The curricula consist of interactive technologies currently being developed as a research science project by the authors of this article. The results are to be established in the following two academic years.

4. Conclusion

I. Policies on integration of social and healthcare services at European and national level are turning into one of the leading imperatives with respect to education of professionals assisting in the social and healthcare system

II. The educational technology found on training in multidisciplinary teams is very useful for the professional competences of students in major Healthcare as well as for students in majors Social Activities and Public Health. These are the competences for work in a multidisciplinary environment, consistent with the approaches of non-discrimination and sensitivity to cultural identity.

References


Provision by the Ministry of Health No 1/08.02.2011 on the professional activities, which nurses, midwives, associate medical professionals and healthcare assistants may perform by assignment or on their own.