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ATTITUDES OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS TOWARDS THE ACTIVITY OF THE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST IN MEDICAL PRACTICE

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Abstract. *Clinical psychology provides mental health services for people of all ages and from all walks of life. Methods and techniques can vary from theory to practice. But the focus of clinical psychology is on assessing clients' mental health through psychological assessment and testing and providing appropriate interventions. In addition to these core activities, clinical psychologists sometimes conduct research and act as consultants.*

This article examines the theoretical knowledge of the subject of clinical psychology, as well as presents good practice in the field and the relationship between clinical psychology and medicine. Empirical research was conducted through a questionnaire on the topic, as well as an analysis of the research results. This article is based on publicly available information from the following types of sources: official documents, official reports, analytical literature examining the profession of clinical psychologist in medicine, as well as scientific publications on the subject. Among the methods of gathering information are a database, world institutions and academic developments in the field of emergency situations, as well as a survey conducted among medical professionals.

Keywords: clinical psychology; attitudes; medicine; medical professionals; mental health services; health care practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Clinical psychology is one of the most popular fields in psychology. Both other psychologists and clinical psychologists are interested in patient behavior and mental processes. Clinical psychologists create research on human behavior, seek to apply the results of that research, and engage in individual assessment. Clinical psychologists face many challenges. A licensed clinical psychologist must meet certain educational, legal and personal qualifications. Attitudes represent an individual's tendency to view a situation positively or negatively. Te are formed on the basis of beliefs, feelings and intentions towards a person, event, object, etc. Attitudes are states of the psyche of each person and determine the way of perception and reaction to the external influences of the social environment. Attitudes fall into two main groups:

- in the context of the momentary emotional states of the personality;
- in the context of an expressed resilient psyche.

The purpose of this article is to make a theoretical-methodological analysis of attitudes of medical specialists towards the activity of the clinical psychologist in medical practice. Through theoretical knowledge about the profession of clinical psychologist, to prove hypotheses related to this profession through empirical research. The object of research is the medical specialists, and the subject is the attitudes of the medical specialists towards the activity of the clinical psychologist in the medical practice.

DISCUSSION

Clinical psychology is a psychological specialty dealing with the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, extreme unacceptable behavior and psychiatric problems. At the heart of the earliest influences in the field of clinical psychology was the work of the Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. He was also one of the first scientists to research and prove his idea that mental illness could be treated by talking and understanding the patient, and it was this talk therapy approach that is often cited as the earliest scientific use in psychology.

Clinical psychology became more established during the First World War period as practitioners demonstrated the utility of psychological assessment. In 1917, the American Association for Clinical Psychology was formed, then renamed the American Psychological Association (APA). During the Second World War, clinical psychologists were called in to help treat the shock of the stressful situation they were in. Nowadays, this is defined as the condition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Clinical psychology is a field that applies psychological research and techniques to „clinical" settings. According to one definition of clinical psychology, it is „*the study of individuals through observation or experimentation, with the intention of promoting change*". Their field is „clinical" because it involves observing and working directly with patients in clinics and related settings. However, practitioners may also work as part of a team of other health or social workers. Clinical psychologists meet with individuals, families, and other groups in settings such as counseling centers, schools, and hospitals. They practice in community health clinics and veterans service centers. Most clients seek psychological services voluntarily. But clinical psychologists are sometimes hired by courts or insurance companies to perform psychological evaluations that inform legal judgments. This is how clinical psychologists assess the mental health of inmates in prisons. (Angelova-Barbalova, N. & Krushkova, S., 2013)

The main tasks of psychology are:

- Studying the rules of the mental development of man in his development.
- Studies of the reaction of reality in the consciousness of the human being.
- Study of mechanisms regulating human actions and activities.
- Studying the mechanisms creating a person's mental traits.
- Determination of specific dependence of mental phenomena depending on the lifestyle and activity of the individual.

The topic has been addressed by numerous researchers who have made significant contributions.. Michael Balint is known for his work on communication between doctors and patients and collaboration within multidisciplinary teams. His work emphasizes the importance of psychological support for patients in medical practice.

Irvin Yalom and Carl Rogers also highlight the therapeutic role of psychologists in medical practice, with a special focus on interpersonal relationships and effective communication with patients

Research methods

Evaluation. In helping to restore mental health, clinical psychologists follow much the same progression that physicians follow in restoring physical health. First, they need to understand what the problem is and what is causing it. (Bouston Commuity College, 2013) In a *diagnostic interview*, the clinical psychologist asks questions that allow the client to talk about himself. These questions explore what the client is thinking, feeling, and doing, and how the past affects their present state. *Behavioral assessment* allows the clinical psychologist to observe and evaluate the client's behavior. This assessment can reveal a pattern of behavior that indicates the presence of a mental disorder and illness. Standardized *psychological tests* may be given to measure mental disorders. These are formal tests that are often given in the form of checklists and questionnaires.

Intervention. Based on what the assessments reveal, the practitioner recommends psychological intervention or treatment. There are different approaches to treatment. Some clinical psychologists prefer one method over another, but multiple approaches can be used when treating a client. Regardless of which approach is used, treatment requires several sessions. Occasional follow-up visits are often part of mental health maintenance plans after treatment is completed.

- The cognitive-behavioral approach argues that many mental disorders stem from a person's negative thoughts and behaviors. These are often revealed through "talk therapy", which involves uncomfortable and painful past topics through honest dialogue. The goal is to help the client recognize emotional triggers and learn how to respond positively to them. (Bouston Commuity College, 2013)
- A psychodynamic approach helps the client become aware of negative thoughts but emphasizes the unconscious mind. Through psychoanalysis, the clinical psychologist helps the client explore and sort out hidden conflicts from the past.
- The humanistic approach is also known as 'client-centred therapy'. It promotes acceptance, empathy, and the idea that the client knows themselves. He also argues that focusing on the present is more important than digging up events from the past.

Consulting. In addition to treating clients, clinical psychologists are sometimes contacted by other health professionals. They may collaborate in public health initiatives or provide expertise.

Research. Although clinical psychologists typically spend most of their time with clients, they are constantly learning from the latest research. They may also conduct original research based on the data they collect.

Clinical psychologists diagnose, assess, and treat mental, behavioral, and emotional disorders. Using the science of psychology to treat complex personality problems, they encourage re-examination of life situations. They also promote resilience and support the complex process of change.

The main competencies of the clinical psychologist are:

- Understanding psychopathology and considerations for diagnosis/intervention.
- Understanding of mental health issues across the lifespan based on a solid knowledge of psychopathology.
- Assessment: ability to integrate and synthesize personality test data with additional standardized assessment measures.
- Consultation: ability to consult with other health and behavioral health professionals and organizations regarding severe psychopathology, suicide and violence.
- Research base: engagement with specific research and critical review of the science, knowledge, and methods relevant to those areas defined as distinct from clinical psychology.

Challenges in communication in medical practice and the role of the clinical psychologist in the diagnostic and treatment process

Clinical psychologists meet with clients to identify problems in their lives—emotional, mental, and behavioral. Through observation, interviews and tests, the psychologist diagnoses any existing or potential disorders. They then formulate a treatment program together with the client. Psychologists regularly monitor the client's progress to ensure that their needs are being met by the course of action and to adjust it if necessary. (Shopnikolova, T., Yanakieva, A., & Vodenicharova, A. 2021).

In their daily practice, clinical psychologists:

- identify psychological, emotional or behavioral problems;
- diagnose psychological, emotional or behavioral disorders;

Table 1. Key Characteristics, Work Areas, and Role of the Clinical Psychologist in Healthcar

Characteristics and Methods of Clinical Psychology	Main Areas of Work in Healthcare	Role of the Clinical Psychologist in a Multidisciplinary Team	Key Problems and Goals
Diagnosis and Assessment: Psychological tests, interviews, behavioral assessments	**Psychotherapy:** Individual and group therapy for treating mental disorders	**Treatment Coordination:** Collaboration with doctors, nurses, and other specialists to provide comprehensive care	**Problem:** Lack of awareness about the role of clinical psychologists among medical staff
Intervention: Cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychodynamic therapy, humanistic therapy	**Patient Counseling:** Psychological support for patients in stressful situations (e.g., pre-surgery)	**Psychoeducation:** Training medical staff and patients in managing stress and psychological issues	**Goal:** Improve communication between clinical psychologists and medical teams
Research Activity: Conducting scientific studies, evaluating the effectiveness of psychological interventions	**Rehabilitation:** Supporting patients after serious illnesses or surgeries to improve their mental health	**Diagnosis:** Assists in diagnosing mental disorders that affect physical health (e.g., depression in chronic illnesses)	**Problem:** Insufficient number of clinical psychologists in healthcare

- develop and implement treatment plans and therapeutic processes;
- help clients set goals and plan actions to achieve personal, social, educational and professional development and adjustment;
- monitor the client‘s progress through regular meetings or sessions;
- conduct research.

In the world‘s scientific circles, there is talk of a direction in medicine called „personalized medicine“. In its essence, it is a wide-ranging concept, summarized by specialists in three separate groups. The first group refers to patients being treated according to the type of disease they were diagnosed with. The second group is individual-oriented, and each patient is treated according to his specific needs. A third group is similar to the second, as the approach is again individual, but the difference is that the doctor pays attention to the patient‘s emotional needs. (Tananska, 2019) The use of the exact approach is at the discretion of the physician.

Patterns of interaction and communication

Among the models of doctor-patient relationships, applied in practice and described in scientific works, the greatest contribution to the development of psychological science is the so-called paternalism. In this model, the doctor has a healthy authority over the patient and has left a huge imprint on the history of medicine and on building an understanding of the approach to health care delivery. (Vodenicharova, 2019). The term „paternalism“ places the doctor and the patient in the relationship of father and child. The child, that is, the patient, finds himself in a subordinate position while trying to achieve a certain goal or deal with a certain problem. The father figure sets the main directions of action, he is authoritative enough to establish a pattern of behavior, boundaries and trust. This understanding has been encoded in the human essence since ancient times, which is why it is still a guiding principle in the relationship between the health professional and the patient today.

However, the mentoring nature of this model is increasingly proving to be inadequate for modern times, or at least insufficient. The need for empathy and understanding of the patient‘s needs on the part of the doctor is a topic of increasing relevance. One such patient need is to assert their autonomy, especially in decision-making.

Accuracy is another key patient expectation of the physician that tests the tolerability threshold and has a direct relationship to the quality of health care. If the doctor is delayed for more than ten minutes, then irritation, tension and mistrust appear in the patient. Delays and non-compliance with the agreed therapy hours not only disrupts communication, but is also a prerequisite for the emergence of conflict situations. (Gadilov, Yanakieva, Vodenicharova, 2015).

Empathy is one of the key skills that today‘s professionals in the psychological disciplines should possess. This is the ability to put yourself in the place of the other, to step into his shoes, to understand his motivation, difficulties and needs. Empathy is a set of abilities by which one person can understand and accept the feelings, desires and emotions of another so that the other feels accepted. A clear definition of empathy was given by the father of psychology, Sigmund Freud, in 1921: "*We consider the mental state of the patient, put ourselves in that state, and try to understand it by comparing it with our own*". (Froyd, 2015) It is believed that the best way to build empathy between doctor and patient is to empathize.

The fact that the experience of the disease is a subjective process that includes the relevant individual-emotional needs should not be overlooked. Anxiety and initial suspicion of the treatment team and its methods were observed in a significant number of patients. As a result of these negative attitudes, both diagnosis and treatment of the patient can be hindered.

The need for communication skills of doctors was brought out as an emphasis by Prof. S. Popova. She argued that communication skills are essential so that doctors can manage emotions in their daily work, uphold humane values, and be objective, tolerant, and impartial to sufferers, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, and other factors. Also, with the right communication approach, doctors extract and convey patient information clearly, comprehensibly and tactfully.

Communication in medical practice

Seamless and effective doctor-patient communication has the potential to help regulate patients‘ emotions, facilitate understanding of medical information, and allow better identification of patients‘ needs, perceptions, and expectations. Those who have good communication with their doctor are more likely to be satisfied with their care and, above all, to share relevant information to accurately diagnose problems, follow advice and adhere to prescribed treatment.(Shopnikolova, T., Yanakieva, A. & Vodenicharova, A., 2021).

There are many barriers to good communication in the doctor-patient relationship, including patient anxiety and fear, the burden of medical liability, fear of possible physical or verbal abuse, as well as unrealistic patient expectations and an unrealistic perception of the doctor as a „magician" , expecting him to be able to help and heal everything. The complexity of the relationship between medical professionals and patients is the reason for the need to study this type of delicate communication. P. Balkanska dwells on the ability to communicate with the patient and on the behavioral models specific to healthcare practice, noting the individual aspects of a psycho-social and moral nature. (Tacheva, 2014).

Communication skills necessary for patient care include taking a history with open-ended questions as well as engaging in focused active listening. Understanding the patient‘s perspective of the illness and expressing empathy are key features of patient-centered communication. Understanding the patient‘s perspective involves exploring the patient‘s feelings, ideas, concerns, and experiences about the impact of the illness, as well as what the patient expects from the physician. Empathy can be expressed by naming the feeling; conveying understanding, respect and support and exploring the patient‘s illness experience and emotions. After revealing the diagnosis, doctors should examine the patient‘s emotional response. Shared decision-making empowers patients by inviting them to consider the pros and cons of different treatment options, including the option of „no treatment." Instead of overwhelming the patient with medical information, small chunks of data should be provided, with the physician‘s aim being to effectively reach the patient and their ability to perceive and understand. Patient-centered communication training programs would be well suited for healthcare professionals who want to improve communication skills and work to optimize an effective communication process. (Shopnikolova, T., Yanakieva, A. & Vodenicharova, A., 2021).

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The aim of the empirical study is to study the attitudes of medical professionals towards the activity of the clinical psychologist in medical practice. Survey research was preferred as the main research component. A mathematical-statistical method was used to process the received empirical information. Synthesizing, summarizing and analyzing methods are also an integral part used to process the results obtained from the base.

The main tasks are:

- To study and compare the attitudes of medical specialists towards the activity of the clinical psychologist.
- To analyze the factors influencing the attitudes of medical specialists towards the activity of the clinical psychologist.

- To analyze information from empirical research and draw conclusions.

Hypothesis 1: It is expected that there will be a positive attitude of the medical specialists towards the activity of the clinical psychologist despite the insufficient information.

Hypothesis 2: It is expected that there is a low level of awareness among the examined persons regarding the activity of the clinical psychologist.

Hypothesis 3: Medical professionals are expected to have an attitude of impartiality regarding the activity of the clinical psychologist, due to a lack of awareness.

Hypothesis 4: Clinical psychology is expected to be predominantly directed at female medical professionals.

Hypothesis 5: It is expected that clinical psychology is a profession typical of young medical professionals.

Hypothesis 6: Attitudes are expected to be that typically the clinical psychologist works as a therapist.

The subjects were 50 medical specialists in the following medical facilities:

- Ajibadem City Clinic - UMBAL Tokuda;
- Kanev UMBAL-Ruse.

The subjects were nurses/midwives and doctors in the aforementioned medical facilities. Doctors have many years of experience, and they will be more familiar in the field of clinical psychology. Nurses/midwives are mostly young or students who do not yet have the necessary experience in the field of clinical psychology. However, there are also nurses/midwives with longer working experience among the surveyed persons.

The limited scope of the research is on the territory of Bulgaria. The survey includes questions of a demographic style - gender, age and profession, as well as specific questions about the user‘s attitude towards the activity of the clinical psychologist:

- Are you familiar with the profession of clinical/medical psychologist?
- Is there a difference between a psychologist and a clinical psychologist?
- Is there a difference between a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist?
- Is the clinical/medical psychologist useful in medical practice?
- What is your opinion of the clinical psychologist profession, negative or positive? Why? Please justify your answer?
- Does the clinical psychologist help patients?
- Does the clinical psychologist help the diagnostic process?
- Does the clinical psychologist help in the healing process?
- Do you think that the cooperation between the clinical psychologist and the medical staff can be improved? How? Please specify.
- How can the clinical psychologist be useful to the physician and medical staff?
- What are the main activities of a clinical/medical psychologist in a hospital environment or in the hospital/department where you work?
- Can the awareness and activity of the clinical psychologist be improved? How? Please justify your answer.

The research is non-representative according to the method of the respondents and was conducted in the period 01-13 June. The survey was prepared in Google Forms. The survey was sent to 60 people, and 50 of them completed it.

The methods used in this work were selected based on their scope, desired accuracy, staff competence, availability of technical means, etc. A central place was occupied by the choice of the method of obtaining information, methods of processing the information, methods of presenting the results. Processing methods are selected depending on the goals of the present development (analysis, prediction, description, explanation).

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

According to the results of the survey, most medical professionals are aware of the profession of clinical psychologist and know of its existence. Also, the respondents are aware that there is a difference between a clinical psychologist, a psychologist and a psychiatrist. The respondents strongly believe that the clinical psychologist is important for the medical staff and the medical institution. Respondents were adamant that the clinical psychologist helps patients both in the treatment process and in the diagnostic process.

The majority of the surveyed persons have a positive opinion about the profession of clinical psychologist. Some of the responses indicated that the work of the clinical psychologist contributes to mental health, the process of awareness and acceptance, as well as coping with the stress of patients, and therefore this profession is extremely important

to the medical environment. According to survey data, the clinical psychologist profession is viewed as a new medical specialty. Moreover, the impact of the clinical psychologist is important for the recovery in the already home environment. According to the respondents, a large part of the communication between the medical staff and the patient can be carried out in the right way precisely through the clinical psychologist. In general, the answers in this direction are positive and it is believed that the clinical psychologist rather helps the treatment process in the treatment facility, offering support to the patient and making good communication between him and the medical team. According to some of the respondents, the clinical psychologist improves the quality of patient treatment and the work process in the different departments of the medical institution.

The researched medical professionals gave specific answers regarding their opinion on whether the presence of a clinical psychologist is important, as well as suggested options for improving communication between the clinical psychologist and the medical staff in the medical facility. According to the survey data, the clinical psychologist definitely helps the patients.

Collaboration between the clinical psychologist and the medical staff needs improvement. The main task facing this relationship is better communication between the two units. According to the data of the conducted research, a very small part of the medical staff is aware of the profession of the clinical psychologist, its functions and activities in the medical institution. Probably because of this, such a person rarely exists in the medical team. Another reason would be that the medical team very rarely turns to the clinical psychologist for help. According to the research conducted, in the AG department of Tokuda Hospital, the clinical psychologists work in a team with the medical staff and there is a very good cooperation between them. According to the respondents, there are areas in medicine where the participation of a clinical psychologist in the treatment-diagnostic process is mandatory. Such are, for example, oncology, hematology, post-resuscitation periods, severe trauma, addictions, after amputations, etc.

Another very important part of improving the cooperation between the clinical psychologist and the medical staff is the management of the staff in the treatment facility. Professionals should be more aware of the activities of the clinical psychologist in order to be able to use them correctly and in precise situations. Also, according to the survey data, the profession of clinical psychologist is neglected. This is probably due to the low awareness of the benefits of his work, as well as the lack of such a professional in the teams in medical institutions. Another answer here states that it is important to initiate a consultation at the discretion of the attending physician. It is also important not to change the clinical psychologist who started treating a particular patient, but to treat him to the end according to the scheme one clinical psychologist - one patient. However, this would greatly complicate the situation when looking for specialists. It becomes clear that such a specialist is difficult to find, and even does not exist in some medical facilities. So recruiting and finding more specialists in one department or medical facility is a difficult process. Overall, according to the survey data, mutual work will greatly improve the relationship between the clinical psychologist and the medical staff.

Continuing the theme from above, the clinical psychologist can be useful to the medical staff in many ways. One of the most important is communication and conversations between the two units. Another very important quality of the clinical psychologist is his knowledge in the field. In general, a psychologist should always possess qualities such as understanding, trust, the right approach when communicating with patients and medical professionals, as well as support. For example, a clinical psychologist would help a postpartum woman deal with postpartum depression. According to many answers, a clinical psychologist can help with specific mental conditions that require the necessary skilled intervention. Last but not least, much of the communication between the medical team and the patient can be improved precisely through the actions of the clinical psychologist. This can happen in a number of ways. For example, by spreading the benefits of this type of professional. Once the medical team is aware of the activities and benefits of the clinical psychologist, it will very quickly improve the healing process.

The important thing in this area is to open more positions for clinical psychologists in medical institutions and to appoint more similar professionals. Also, daily work with medical teams would enhance the work and knowledge of this profession.

According to the conducted research, medical specialists are familiar with the activities of the clinical psychologist, but they are of the opinion that most of the medical personnel do not know about its functions. It would be good to work in this direction to improve the quality of medical treatment. However, the subjects were aware of the basic functions of a clinical psychologist. According to them, this specialist makes consultations related to the mental

status, resource and capacity of the patient, as well as related to specific emotional and stressful conditions. According to the research, the clinical psychologist helps the team in one way or another. For example, with my work as a consultant and therapist. However, some of the researched persons have not yet worked with a clinical psychologist, which once again reinforces the thesis that greater communication and awareness of the medical staff about its functions is needed.

Below I will confirm/deny the hypotheses stated at the beginning of this article, supported by data from the conducted survey:

Hypothesis 1: It is expected that there will be a positive attitude of the medical specialists towards the activity of the clinical psychologist despite the insufficient information - the Hypothesis is fully confirmed. Indeed, there is a positive attitude among medical professionals about the clinical psychologist. According to the answers they gave, medical professionals are willing to work with a clinical psychologist and improve their awareness of their activities.

Hypothesis 2: It is expected that there is a low level of awareness among the researched persons regarding the activity of the clinical psychologist - The hypothesis was not confirmed. Based on the answers from the research, I can confirm that the medical specialists are well acquainted with the activity of the clinical psychologist and have the desire to improve their knowledge in this area.

Hypothesis 3: Presence of impartiality regarding the activity of the clinical psychologist, due to lack of awareness – The hypothesis was not confirmed. The subjects are absolutely biased towards the activity of the clinical psychologist and have the desire to learn more. It turns out that medical professionals are aware of the clinical psychologist‘s work and activities.

Hypothesis 4: Clinical psychology is expected to be predominantly aimed at female medical professionals – Hypothesis not confirmed due to lack of data. The supposed reason for this is that no specific question has been included in this direction.

Hypothesis 5: It is expected that clinical psychology is a profession typical of young medical professionals – The hypothesis was not confirmed because there is not enough data, but it can be said that clinical psychology is of interest mainly among young medical professionals, which does not exclude the interest shown and by experienced medical professionals.

Hypothesis 6: Attitudes are expected to be that usually the clinical psychologist works as a therapist - The hypothesis is fully confirmed, although the respondents answered that there is a difference between the clinical psychologist and the psychologist and the psychiatrist, most of the answers are focused on the idea that the clinical psychologist acts as a therapist. This is confirmed by answers such as „consultations related to the mental status, resource and capacity of the patient“ (44%) or „consultations related to specific emotional and acute conditions in the pre- and post-operative period“ (42%), as well and „work as a psychotherapist“ (26%).

The main conclusions of the research are that the clinical psychologist is a well-known profession, but not well integrated in the work process. Medical professionals want to get to know the profession of „clinical psychologist“, as well as its activities, in order to have an objective opinion, it is also necessary to see the work in practice. The results indicate that in both medical institutions where the study was conducted, the work of the clinical psychologist is needed, but not well implemented in the process. As a good practice, various types of integration of the work process of the clinical psychologist in the daily duties of doctors and medical staff can be indicated here. Nowadays, mental health is of utmost importance and therefore timely intervention of specialists in this field is necessary. This would improve both patient well-being and seamless communication and understanding by the medical team. The clinical psychologist can be the „bridge“ in communication between the patient, the medical team and the patient‘s relatives.

Changes are needed in the regulation of the profession, a clear definition of the functions of the clinical psychologist in a hospital environment, so that the medical team is aware of the activity of the specialist, because the need for his work is great, and the benefits are undeniable.

The profession of clinical psychologist is recognized and respected throughout Europe and the world, and is an integral part of the formation of a medical team in any hospital facility. The benefits of joint work have been proven both theoretically and practically, which gives reason for recommendations to start a procedure for implementing clinical psychology and its specialists in medical care in Bulgaria.

Medicine is a humanitarian science concerned with preserving the life and health of the patient. Health in the form of mental and physical, which

means that an integral part of a person‘s well-being is also his psyche, soul, emotions and feelings.

CONCLUSION

Clinical psychology is a specific method of examining individual human behavior, which determines both the typical and the individual in the subject, considered as a being who has to deal with a certain situation. (Angelova-Barbalova, Krushkova, 2013).

Clinical psychology provides mental health services for people of all ages and from all walks of life. Methods and techniques can vary from theory to practice. But the focus of clinical psychology is on assessing clients' mental health through psychological assessment and testing and providing appropriate interventions. In addition to these core activities, clinical psychologists sometimes conduct research and act as consultants. From the conducted empirical research, it is concluded that the clinical psychologist is a well-known profession, but not well integrated into the work process. This necessitates the development of models and methods by which the clinical psychologist could be integrated into the work process in hospital facilities.

Clinical psychologists in the hospital setting are helpful with:

- Identifying psychological, emotional, or behavioral problems.
- Diagnosing psychological, emotional, or behavioral disorders.
- Develop and implement treatment plans and therapeutic processes.
- Observation, consultation, and communication with the patient as well as with the medical team.

Clinical psychology integrates a wealth of social science, theory, and clinical knowledge with the goal of understanding, preventing, and alleviating psychological distress or dysfunction. Promoting subjective well-being and personal development. Central to her practice are post-assessment psychological diagnosis, clinical formulation, and psychotherapy, although clinical psychologists are also involved in research, teaching, and consultation, as well as forensic expertise and the development of useful programs and methods. In many countries, clinical psychology is a regulated mental health profession, and its place and importance are proven, accepted, respected, and regulated. I believe that the present work can contribute to the understanding and guidance for the profession of "clinical psychologist" to be recognized, accepted, respected, sought after and above all regulated, as well as to be actively practiced in every department of every medical institution.

The present article proposed research on the topic of the attitudes of medical professionals towards the activity of the clinical psychologist in medical practice. In summary, the objectives set at the beginning were achieved:

- Studying the rules of the mental development of man in his development.
- Studies of the reaction of reality in the consciousness of the human being.
- Study of mechanisms regulating human actions and activities.
- Studying the mechanisms creating a person‘s mental traits.
- Determination of specific dependence of mental phenomena depending on the lifestyle and activity of the individual.
- Research and comparison of the attitudes of medical specialists towards the activity of the clinical psychologist.
- Analysis of the factors influencing the attitudes of medical specialists towards the activity of the clinical psychologist.
- Analysis of information from empirical research and conclusions.

After achieving the above-described tasks, the goal was successfully achieved, namely, through theoretical knowledge on the topic of the clinical psychologist, through the empirical research and conducted survey, the attitude and knowledge of the medical staff towards this profession was proven.

The field of clinical psychology will continue to grow and develop due to the changing needs of the population as well as changes in approaches to health care policy.

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