

Dóra Varga SE-ETK, Noémi Sulyok SE-ETK

SE-ETK Department of Social Sciences

SE-ETK Department of Health Sciences and Clinical Studies

Comparative research of autism related university studies and family care plans of Hungarian health visitor students

Introduction: The number of autistic children has been increasing in the last few decades. Based on the latest data around 1 in 88 children has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). One of the work roles and responsibilities of Hungarian health visitors is to recognise the suspicious signs of autism, to support the family and to provide special care for them after the diagnosis. The aims of our surveys were to examine the university studies about autism and explore future caring plans based on the acquired knowledge of the Hungarian health visitor students.

Methods: Full-time health visitor students were involved in our Hungarian, quantitative research. They participated in medical higher education in Budapest, Miskolc and Szeged. 131 people gave valuable answers (total response rate: 74,8%).

Results: 63,8% of the health visitor students have received some information about autism during their training programme (in the comparative evaluation of the subjects the p-rates ranged from 0,005 to >0,001 among the colleges), but only 8% of them considered that this information was detailed. 24,2% of the students of Semmelweis University, 16,2% of University of Szeged and none of the health visitor students from Miskolc – for that matter incorrectly- reckoned autism as developmental disorder ($p=0,003$). The great majority of the students agreed that the most important duty of the health visitor's work is recognising the early signs of autism. Only 20,0% of the respondents thought, they can get in adequate contact with autistic children according to their current knowledge, but 54,9% of them weren't sure about it. The students expect the higher education system to give more information about autism.

Conclusion: A greater proportion of health visitor students do not have sufficient knowledge of autism which may reduce the quality of their work in the future. Therefore (future) health visitors must be given the opportunity to get detailed information about this issue, during the training programmes of BSc and after graduation.

Supervisor: Helga Judit Feith PhD, Zsuzsanna Soósne Kiss PhD