DEVELOPMENT OF NURSING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND

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The analysis of nursing professional education in Switzerland proves that it has undergone several stages of reform in recent decades. By the early 1990s the Swiss nursing educational and professional training programmes lasted three or four years, and their specialization concerned general nursing, pediatrics, psychiatry and home-care nursing. The programmes offered in more than 50 educational institutions, often in the form of dual education, i.e. vocational training took place at the hospitals throughout the country. Educational and professional programmes of Level I (three years) and Level II (four years) were being implemented by educational institutions from 1992 to 2001 [1].

It is necessary to note that professional training of nurses was regulated by the Red Cross, which was legally mandated to perform those functions by the Swiss Conference of 26 Cantonal Ministries of Health. Simultaneously, other vocational training institutions were subordinated to the Federal Office of Professional Education and Technology. As in other European countries, the Swiss educational system comprises primary, secondary and higher (tertiary) levels. Regarding professional education of nurses, it is implemented at the highest level of general education and higher education. Higher level of secondary education covers vocational and general training programmes. Higher education programmes are implemented at Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences and Colleges. However, there were no such educational and professional programmes for training mid-level health workers. In 2000 Switzerland incorporated academic nursing education into its university system [2].

In 1995 reforms in higher education and establishment of Universities of Applied Sciences led to the organization of practice-oriented learning based on educational and practical programmes of training at the first (Bachelor degree) and the second (Master degree) levels. It is essential to mark that at that time Universities of Applied Sciences mainly offered highly specialized training programmes for paramedics as Bachelor degree programmes in the field of nursing and midwifery [3].

Successful completion of the three-year and four-year programmes offered by institutions in the system of Vocational Education and Training, as well as passing the
Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Examination, provided an opportunity for students to obtain a federal diploma.

However, the international trend of reducing the number of nursing professionals has forced the government to take a number of measures to reform professional education of nurses. It is worth underlining that this trend has regional and global nature, as the scientists Buchan and Aiken remark in their research [4]. They also emphasize the negative impact of this trend on the health of patients overall. This reduction in the number of nurses poses a new challenge to the system of higher education, which aims to train highly qualified specialists in nursing and sufficient numbers according to the needs of labour market and society [5]. We agree that “medical workforce is considered as strategic capital, as one of the most important components of the resource provision of the health care system and a leading asset required providing medical care to the population” [6, p. 183]. It is noteworthy that this trend is distinctive for Switzerland, which is the subject of our research, and Ukraine.

The beginning of the XXI century is characterized by the trend to intensify migration processes. In this context, Switzerland is one of those European countries that tolerates migration. Analyzing the problem of immigration of medical workers from Ukraine, Melnyk L. A notes that the main reasons for professional immigration are: “low wages, better conditions of medical practice, the level of the latest technologies, opportunities for advanced training, gaining new professional experience and certain social guarantees in the country-recipient (host country)” [7, p. 83]. In addition to the influx of highly skilled workers over the past 15 – 20 years, migration is encouraged by the Government of Switzerland for the purpose of economic development; and the need in cross-cultural education of the population appears. The issue of a cross-cultural component in the training of future professionals is the subject of debate among scholars and practitioners. The scientist Hurenko O. I. marks that polyculturalism should be considered from different perspectives, in particular, ethnic, national, religious, gender and etc. [8]. In this context, Lausanne University Hospital launched the Swiss Migrant Friendly Hospitals (MFH) project [9], which aims to acquire knowledge, develop skills and abilities of medical workers, necessary for cross-cultural communication and interaction.

As our study focuses on the development of vocational training specialists in nursing, it is worth noting that the issue of multicultural education and training of health professionals is particularly relevant. For many medical workers it can be difficult to find common language with patients, resulting in a growing mistrust of the healthcare professional, dissatisfaction with health services provided to patients, declining confidence in the health system, and, consequently, low efficacy of treatment. These issues are widely studied by scientists Betancourt J., Green A., Carillo E. [10]. Nevertheless, the discourse about training a highly qualified professional, responding to the labour market needs, is under close attention. In this context, Lubinska O. emphasizes that “modernization of higher medical education, based on training a creative individual, envisages the formation of real conditions for the enhancement of his intellectual, cultural and professional potential stimulating the desire for self-realization” [11, p. 109].
Federal Law on the Academic Medical Professions of 26 June 2006, Rs 811.11 (2006) determines goals and tasks of educational and professional programmes of higher and post-graduate education [12].

According to the report of Organization for economic co-operation and development of April 2009 the main benefits of the system of pre-higher education in Switzerland were: orientation on the labour market needs and demands of employers; close cooperation between the federal and cantonal governments and trade unions; integration of classroom training and stem training; the effectiveness of financing and equipment of vocational pre-higher institutions; self-sufficiency of apprenticeship programmes; a wide range of educational and professional training programmes for specialists; high qualification of lecturers, vocational training instructors and examinators; systematic counselling and career guidance of applicants for education, etc. [13].

Therefore, according to the study, in recent decades the system of professional training of nurses has undergone significant changes caused by both the trends of globalized world and the needs of the labour market, the demands of society.

References:
