

ENROLLMENT MOTIVES AMONG CANDIDATES FOR NURSING STUDIES AT THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

MOTYWY PODEJMOWANIA KSZTAŁCENIA NA KIERUNKU PIELĘGNIARSTWO WŚRÓD KANDYDATÓW NA STUDIA W WARSZAWSKIM UNIWERSYTECIE MEDYCZNYM

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A – przygotowanie projektu badania | study design, **B** – zbieranie danych | data collection, **C** – analiza statystyczna | statistical analysis, **D** – interpretacja danych | interpretation of data, **E** – przygotowanie maszynopisu | manuscript preparation, **F** – opracowanie piśmiennictwa | literature review, **G** – pozyskanie funduszy | sourcing of funding

SUMMARY

Background: Candidates for nursing studies should be aware of the specific nature, social expectations and vocation associated with their future occupation.

Aim of the study: To examine the enrollment motives among candidates for nursing studies at the Medical University of Warsaw.

Material and methods: This study was conducted in a group of 200 candidates for nursing studies as part of the recruitment process. The study data were collected using a proprietary questionnaire with motives for selecting nursing studies classified as autotelic, instrumental, or incidental. The results were statistically analyzed using PQStat software ver. 1.4.2.324.

Results: The most common autotelic motive reported by the candidates was the desire to help others (98%). Analysis of instrumental motives revealed that 89.5% of respondents identified guaranteed employment as a motivating factor whilst 70% stated the course was a means to achieve stable employment. The ease of enrollment was a motive for selecting nursing studies by 24.5% of respondents. The older the age of the candidates, the greater the contribution incidental motives for selecting nursing studies. Higher instrumental motives scores were more frequent among urban residents. Autotelic motives were stated more frequently by candidates choosing nursing as their first field of studies.

Conclusions: 1. Autotelic motives were predominant in the choices made by candidates for nursing studies. 2. The age of the candidates, urban vs. rural residential status and the choice of nursing as the first field of studies were factors that significantly differentiated the motives for selecting nursing studies. 3. As part of the curriculum, the university should ensure that newly enrolled students have adequate opportunities to expand their interests in the chosen profession and to satisfy their aspirations.

KEYWORDS: study motives, nursing, education

STRESZCZENIE

Wstęp: Kandydaci na studia medyczne powinni mieć świadomość specyfiki przyszłego zawodu, dużych oczekiwań społecznych i swoistej misji związanej z wykonywaniem zawodu.

Cel pracy: Poznanie motywów podjęcia kształcenia na kierunku pielęgniarstwo przez kandydatów na studia.

Materiał i metody: Badania przeprowadzono wśród 200 kandydatów na studia w toku rekrutacji. W celu zebrania materiału badawczego posłużono się autorskim kwestionariuszem ankiety, w którym motywy zostały sklasyfikowane jako: autoteliczne, instrumentalne oraz przypadkowe. Wyniki poddano analizie statystycznej z użyciem pakietu statystycznego PQStat ver. 1.4.2.324.

Wyniki: Wśród motywów autotelicznych najczęściej kandydaci wskazywali chęć niesienia pomocy innym – 98%. W grupie motywów instrumentalnych 89,5% badanych wskazało gwarancję zatrudnienia, 70% – możliwość zdobycia pracy dającej stabilizację życiową. Łatwość dostania się na kierunek pielęgniarstwo jako motyw wyboru kierunku wskazało 24,5% respondentów. Im starsi byli kandydaci, tym wyższy poziom motywacji przypadkowej występował w wyborze kierunku studiów. Ankietowani pochodzący z miast częściej wskazywali wyższe wartości w kategorii motywacji instrumentalnej. Motywy autoteliczne były częściej wskazywane przez kandydatów wybierających pielęgniarstwo jako pierwszy kierunek.

Wnioski: 1. W wyborze kierunku pielęgniarstwo u kandydatów na te studia przeważały motywy autoteliczne. 2. Wiek kandydatów, miejsce zamieszkania oraz wybór pielęgniarstwa jako pierwszego kierunku różnicują istotnie motywy podejmowania studiów. 3. W toku kształcenia uczelnia powinna zapewnić rozpoczynającym studia studentom możliwości rozwoju zainteresowań związanych z zawodem oraz zaspakajania ich aspiracji.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: motywy kształcenia, pielęgniarstwo, edukacja

BACKGROUND

Motives are the driving forces behind human activities aimed at the pursuit of goal-directed behavior. The intensity, strength, and extent of motives may vary and thus reflect the effort an individual expends pursuing their goals and aspirations [1]. According to one classification system, motivations can be divided into autotelic (internal), instrumental (external), and incidental [2]. In autotelic motivation, the motives behind an activity are related to the activity *per se* being taken up voluntarily and not in order to achieve any potential benefits. Autotelic motivation reflects values as an end in themselves, such as the desire to help others [3]. Studying, when driven by internal motivation, leads to the feeling of satisfaction; an individual finds pleasure in learning new knowledge or skills, which in turn leads to the achievement of good results in the educational process [4]. Instrumental motivation are values used as a means to achieve goals and values other than the nature and the social role of the nursing profession; these may include, for example, guaranteed employment [3]. Concerning educational process, external motivation may be referred to when the achievements of the student are not subject to external control [4]. Incidental motivation is secondary to the unawareness of the actual motive for certain activity, e.g. ignorance with regard to course options or peer pressure during course selection. These types of motives behind the choice of the studies are the least desirable from the points of view of both the university and the student [5].

The underlying motives of human behavior and pursuits may vary and include, for example, decisions based on long considerations, momentary fascinations, or coincidence. Each of these motives may have certain consequences for the future of the individual. In addition, the motives behind the choice of future occupation may vary among young adults [6]. The choice of occupation is often the first, the most important and most difficult decision made by a young person, as it is associated with the choice of an individual's path of life. Candidates for nursing studies should be aware of the specific nature, social expectations and vocation associated with their future occupation [3]. Even though being a nurse is a high-risk occupation that

involves high levels of stress and requires much sacrifice, an increase in the interest in nursing studies has been observed at the Medical University of Warsaw (MUW) in recent years [7]. This is particularly important for the future of the nursing profession. The decision to join the nursing profession is associated with the requirement of conscious development of the student's system of values and by adapting behavioral patterns that are desirable for the future occupation [1]. Nursing is directly related to human wellbeing. The experiences associated with being exposed to disease, pain, and death require key psychophysical and social predispositions for this occupation as well as strong motivation to carry out the role of nursing. Clinical decision making and occupational professionalism can contribute to improved patient care, leading to the satisfaction derived from this occupation [8]. Selecting nursing due to a "lack of other possibilities" leads to higher levels of future emotional and professional burnout; the risk of such burnout is significant in the nursing profession [6].

To learn the motives behind human activities is to learn the goals being pursued [9]. Identifying the motives underlying the decision to enroll in nursing studies and consideration of these motives within the recruitment process may have a positive impact on nursing workforce retention in Poland. Understanding the motives of prospective nursing studies students can assist in identifying the determinants of educational achievement associated with increased satisfaction and participation in professional knowledge and skills development, allowing nurses to achieve more robust professional skills. The decision to enroll in nursing studies may be influenced by peers, teachers and parents. Teachers and parents in particular might benefit from a deeper understanding of the motives of students wishing to adopt nursing studies, as a means of identifying candidates' areas of interest and providing support during the decision-making process [10].

AIM OF THE STUDY

To examine and analyze the enrollment motives among candidates for nursing studies at the MUW.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted as part of the recruitment process in a group of 200 candidates for first-level undergraduate nursing studies at the MUW. The study data were collected from candidates filing their applications in person at the MUW recruitment center. A total of 714 candidates took part in the recruitment process of which 230 were selected for document submission.

The study data were collected using a proprietary questionnaire, including the responders' demographic information, and a survey with scale-scored questions focused on: the role of other people in the decision-making process; self-assessment of personal predisposition for the nursing profession; and, the motives behind the choice of nursing studies. Autotelic, instrumental and incidental motives were identified and analyzed for study purposes.

The statistical analysis of the results was carried out using PQStat software ver. 1.4.2.324. Analyses of correlations and inter-group comparisons were made using Spearman's correlation coefficient, Mann-Whitney U-test, Kruskal-Wallis test and Student's t-test.

RESULTS

Study group characteristics

The study population consisted of 96.2% women and 3.8% men in the age range of 18–28 years. The most populous group of candidates was aged 18–19 years (85.5%). Ninety-one percent of candidates had a general high-school level educational background. Urban residents accounted for 68.5% of the study group with rural residents comprising the remaining 31.5%. Mean

grades in the range of 4.0–4.4 were declared by 35.5% of responders. Fifty percent of candidates declared nursing to be their first choice of studies. Thirty-two percent of responders applied for nursing only, while the other 68% declared applying for other health studies as well.

Motives behind taking up nursing studies

For 70.0% of candidates, the choice regarding the field of studies was entirely personal (rated 'surely yes' on the survey). The decision to take up studies to satisfy parental aspirations ('surely yes' or 'rather yes') was made by 4.5% of candidates. Peer opinions were taken into account by 6.5% of responders, while teachers' opinions were taken into account by 1.5% of responders. Ranking the factors according to the average values showed that the choice of nursing studies was mainly the candidates' decision (1.33) and was a decision made in the pursuit of their dreams (2.02) (Tab. 1).

The most important factor behind the choice of studies for 99% of candidates was pursuit of their personal interests. The character traits and predispositions to the occupation were influential for 97.5% and 97.5% of candidates, respectively. When ranked from the lowest to the highest mean values, the student-related factors show that the choice of nursing studies was dictated mainly by the candidates' personal interests (1.58) and personality traits (1.66) (Tab. 2).

The largest percentage of responders (98%) stated that a willingness to help others was a key motive for enrolling in nursing studies. The ability to satisfy personal aspirations was important for 69% of responders. Twenty-six percent of responders noted that the potential for development in the role was a clear reason for enrolling in nursing studies. The ranking of the auto-

Table 1. Individuals and factors supporting the decision to take up nursing studies

Individuals and factors	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
	Surely yes	Rather yes	Rather not	Surely not		
	%	%	%	%		
Peers' opinions	0.5	6.0	43.5	50.0	3.43	0.63
Defiance of others' opinions	0.5	3.5	27.5	68.5	3.64	0.58
Pursuit of dreams	24.0	52.0	22.0	2.0	2.02	0.74
Personal decision	70.0	28.0	1.0	1.0	1.33	0.55
Friend's persuasion	0.5	1.5	38.5	59.5	3.57	0.55
Impact of teachers	0.0	1.5	26.0	72.5	3.71	0.49
Parental aspirations	2.0	2.5	41.5	54.0	3.48	0.65

Table 2. Student-related factors of importance in the choice of the nursing studies

Factor	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
	Surely yes	Rather yes	Rather not	Surely not		
	%	%	%	%		
Personal interests	43.0	56.0	1.0	0.0	1.58	0.51
Character traits	37.0	60.5	2.5	0.0	1.66	0.53
Previous skills	12.0	21.5	56.0	10.5	2.65	0.83
Educational achievements	10.0	36.0	47.0	7.0	2.51	0.77
System of values	24.5	71.5	4.0	0.0	1.80	0.49
Predispositions to the job	31.0	66.5	1.5	1.0	1.73	0.54

telic motives shows that the choice of nursing studies was dictated mainly by the candidates' willingness to help others (1.66) as well as to expand personal interests and passions (1.66) (Tab. 3).

Regarding motives within the instrumental class, 89.5% of responders reported guaranteed employment as a motive behind choosing the field of studies. For 70% of responders, entering an occupation that ensured stability and security was equally important. The willingness to continue family traditions was declared by 15.5% of responders. When ranked from the lowest to the highest mean values, the instrumental motives show that the choice of nursing studies was dictated mainly by the possibilities of finding employment (1.90), acquiring a career that ensured stability (2.10) and continuing a professional career abroad (2.16) (Tab. 4).

In the incidental motivation category, obtaining a university diploma was an important motivation for 85.5% of candidates, while the ease of enrollment was declared a key motivation by 24.5% of responders. When ranked from the lowest to the highest mean values, obtaining a university diploma was the motive declared by the largest number of responders (1.93). 'Continued eligibility for financial benefits' (3.58) and the 'last chance of taking any type of studies' were of little importance (3.39) (Tab. 5).

Out of all three motivation categories considered in this study, the lowest mean score of 1.84 was obtained for autotelic motives while the lowest mean score for instrumental motives was 2.67. The highest mean score (3.14) was obtained for incidental motivations (Tab. 6).

Table 3. Motives behind the choice of studies – autotelic motivation

Autotelic motives	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
	Surely yes	Rather yes	Rather not	Surely not		
	%	%	%	%		
Expanding one's interests and passions	25.0	69.5	5.0	0.5	1.81	0.53
Willingness to help others	36.5	61.5	2.0	0.0	1.66	0.52
Satisfying personal aspirations	18.5	69.0	11.5	1.0	1.95	0.58
Job offering a large potential for development	26.0	56.5	16.5	1.0	1.93	0.68

Table 4. Motives behind the choice of studies – instrumental motivation

Instrumental motives	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
	Surely yes	Rather yes	Rather not	Surely not		
	%	%	%	%		
Family tradition	1.5	12.0	31.5	55.0	3.40	0.76
Ambition to get a job of high social prestige	10.0	53.0	33.5	3.5	2.31	0.70
Guarantee of employment	22.0	67.5	9.5	1.0	1.90	0.59
Willingness to continue family traditions	3.0	12.5	38.0	46.5	3.28	0.80
Ability to continue professional career abroad	28.0	32.0	36.5	3.5	2.16	0.87
Getting a well-paid job	12.0	40.5	44.5	3.0	2.39	0.73
Possibility of getting a job ensuring stability and security	21.0	49.0	29.0	1.0	2.10	0.73
Inability of finding a job in current occupation	1.0	2.5	4.5	92.0	3.88	0.47

Table 5. Motives behind the choice of studies – incidental motivation

Incidental motives	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
	Surely yes	Rather yes	Rather not	Surely not		
	%	%	%	%		
Last chance of taking any type of studies	3.0	8.5	35.0	53.5	3.39	0.77
Random choice	0.0	1.5	39.0	59.5	3.58	0.52
Ease of enrollment	2.5	22.0	45.5	30.0	3.03	0.79
Failure to qualify for other studies	5.0	6.5	40.0	48.5	3.32	0.81
Getting a university diploma	25.5	60.0	10.5	4.0	1.93	0.72
Continued eligibility for pension, alimony, other benefits	2.5	5.5	24.0	68.0	3.58	0.71

Table 6. Mean scores in individual motivation categories

Motivation category	Mean	SD	Minimum	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile	Maximum
Autotelic	1.84	0.38	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.75
Instrumental	2.67	0.34	1.5	2.5	2.8	2.9	3.50
Incidental	3.14	0.39	1.5	3.0	3.2	3.3	4.00

Sociodemographic factors of importance in taking up nursing studies

Candidates of higher age scored higher in relation to incidental motivation ($p < 0.01$). Regarding autotelic or instrumental motivation, the results were not significantly correlated with the age of the responders. Higher scores in the instrumental motives category were more frequent among urban residents ($p < 0.05$). No significant correlations were observed in autotelic or instrumental motivations ($p > 0.05$). Higher scores in autotelic and instrumental motivations were obtained in the group of candidates for whom nursing was not the first choice of studies ($p = 0.026$ and $p = 0.049$, respectively). For incidental motivation, a statistically significantly ($p < 0.001$) higher score was obtained in the group of candidates for whom nursing was the first choice of studies. No significant difference in autotelic motivation ($p = 0.244$) was observed between candi-

dates who applied for nursing studies only and candidates who applied for other studies as well. A significant ($p = 0.010$) difference was observed for instrumental motives, with higher scores in the group of candidates who applied for other studies, in addition to nursing studies. With regard to incidental motivation, a statistically significantly ($p < 0.001$) higher score was obtained in the group of candidates for whom nursing was the only choice of studies.

DISCUSSION

The present analysis confirms a key finding in the literature: that most young adults make decisions regarding the field of studies or future occupation independently [1,8,11]. We were unable to confirm the results by Kropiwnicka et al. [11] or [8] who suggested a significant role of parents in the decision-making process. Satisfying parental aspirations was declared

Table 7. Sociodemographic variables versus motivation categories

Variable	Score	Motivation						Motivation		
		Autotelic		Instrumental		Incidental		A	Ins	Inc
Gender	Female	1.81	±0.44	2.65	±0.37	3.15	±0.44	0.995	0.779	0.133
	Male	1.80	±0.60	2.70	±0.19	3.33	±0.67			
Age	18-19	1.85	±0.36	2.68	±0.33	3.11	±0.37	-0.084	-0.059	0.201*
	20-21	1.62	±0.44	2.54	±0.27	3.20	±0.41			
	22-23	1.92	±0.55	2.76	±0.41	3.30	±0.53			
	24-25	1.67	±0.52	2.92	±0.47	3.78	±0.25			
	>25	1.87	±0.53	2.69	±0.44	3.50	±0.00			
Educational background	General high school	1.83	±0.37	2.67	±0.33	3.12	±0.38	0.201	0.932	0.226
	Post-secondary medical	1.75	±0.50	2.73	±0.45	3.33	±0.29			
	Vocational high school	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	Higher	2.02	±0.53	2.72	±0.34	3.25	±0.58			
Mean grade	6.0-5.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.073	0.078	0.075
	5.4-5.0	1.87	±0.30	2.61	±0.32	2.85	±0.46			
	4.9-4.5	1.79	±0.40	2.64	±0.35	3.13	±0.35			
	4.4-4.0	1.84	±0.37	2.71	±0.27	3.17	±0.39			
	3.9-3.5	1.87	±0.39	2.66	±0.36	3.15	±0.36			
	3.4-3.0	1.90	±0.38	2.78	±0.38	3.13	±0.50			
	2.9-2.5	1.00	±0.00	1.62	±0.00	3.50	±0.00			
Area of residence	Rural (not a municipality seat)	1.87	±0.34	2.64	±0.35	3.14	±0.34	0.051	0.175*	0.040
	Rural (a municipality seat)	1.68	±0.40	2.56	±0.36	3.08	±0.50			
	Urban (≤50,000 of inhabitants)	1.83	±0.47	2.62	±0.34	3.13	±0.43			
	Urban (>50,000 and ≤100,000 of inhabitants)	1.91	±0.31	2.69	±0.28	3.16	±0.31			
	Urban (>100,000 of inhabitants)	1.84	±0.37	2.75	±0.33	3.16	±0.39			
Was nursing your first choice of studies?	Yes	1.77	±0.39	2.63	±0.35	3.26	±0.29	0.025	0.048	0.001
	No	1.89	±0.36	2.72	±0.31	3.02	±0.43			
What other studies have you also applied for at the same time?	Only this one	1.79	±0.42	2.59	±0.37	3.27	±0.32	0.243	0.010	0.001
	More	1.86	±0.36	2.72	±0.31	3.08	±0.40			

* statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.05$).

as one of the motives behind the choice of studies by only 4.5% of candidates in the present study. Previous studies have shown that nearly half of nursing students declare social bonds to individuals in medical careers [11]. Some pressures and expectations of the families with medical traditions may be apparent in contemporary nursing studies students, as 6–15% of responders noted that family values were a consideration during their decision-making process [1,3].

Candidate-related factors were also of high importance in our study group. For nearly all candidates, their personal interests, personality traits and predispositions for the role guided the choice of studies. The percentage was significantly higher than that obtained by Waszkiewicz et al. [3]. It is worthwhile to provide opportunities for individuals who choose their studies according to their personal interests so that they may expand their interests in the profession, potentially enhancing their professional role. It appears to be a legitimate claim that in disciplines that require more learning, skills and more time for personal learning, such as the medical sciences, motives such as personal interests and educational achievements to date may translate to future professional outcomes. One third of candidates declared that the previously obtained skills were important when making their decision. This may be associated with increased social involvement of young people, including in the charity or voluntary sector. Indeed, according to the literature, one-in-three Polish volunteers are less than 25 years old [12]. The present study, as well as the findings of Kropiwnicka et al., showed that the chosen the choice of nursing studies matched the aspirations of 80% of responders [11]. The ability to expand personal passion, pursue interests, and engage in a role offering a possibility for development were taken into account by many responders. It seems that such motivations would allow the candidates to further develop their passions, continue their education at higher levels, and ensure professional growth.

According to the expectations of today's recipients of health services, nurses are required to be fully professional as well as knowledgeable and capable of care that considers psychological aspects, as well as demonstrating diligence, patience, and understanding. These traits may largely impact the nurse's performance of his or her professional duties. In the study conducted by Cipora et al., being sensitive to the needs of individuals who require support was declared as the motive for enrolling in nursing studies by 27.7% of responders [1]. The results of the present study confirm the reports of other authors regarding the choice of studies being motivated by the willingness to help others [1,3,6,13].

Another group of motives analyzed in the present study consisted of instrumental motives aimed at the achievement of benefits and values other than those associated with the social role of the nursing profession. The high unemployment rates and the uncertainty of the employment market in the contemporary nursing field may explain why the main instrumental

motive declared by responders was the guarantee of employment as well as the possibility of a career associated with stability and security. Many health centers in Poland face understaffing of nurses, while those already employed are overloaded with work. The finding that the choice of nursing studies was being guided by the possibility of acquiring an occupation and the security from unemployment was also highlighted by Kropiwnicka et al. [11].

A high level of awareness of the quality of the vocational aspects of the nursing role may be supported by the observation that half of the candidates declared the possibility of continuing their professional career abroad as one of the motives for engaging in nursing studies. However, as there is a shortage of nurses in Poland, it is very disturbing that the candidates look for improvement and development of their individual careers abroad. In the studies conducted by Kropiwnicka et al. [11], the percentage of nursing studies students expressing the desire to pursue their career aims abroad was lower than in the present study (37.5%).

Many responders declared the ambition to get an occupation of high social prestige as one of the motives guiding the choice of the studies. In a study conducted by Chmielewska and Krupienicz, this motive was declared by 36.9% of responders [14] as compared to 15.6% of responders in the study by Kropiwnicka et al.; the percentage rates were much lower among the nursing students as compared to the medical students. The societal demand for this professional group as well as a possibility of getting a financially rewarding occupation were other factors taken into account by the candidates (52.5%) [14]. According to the data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, the mean gross salary of a nurse in Poland is PLN 3,300, corresponding to ca. PLN 18 per hour [15]. Therefore, a question arises whether the candidates for nursing studies are actually aware of the real incomes of Polish nurses.

Incidental motivation behind the choice of the studies is the least desirable for of motivation from the points of view of both the student and the university. These motivations may lead to one being dissatisfied with their studies or less involved in the pursuit of knowledge, which in turn may result in achieving lower skills. A low percentage of candidates in the present study emphasized the importance of these motivations. In previous studies, the respective percentage rates were higher (8–14%) [1,8]. As demonstrated by the analysis of responses to the question regarding personal identification with the profession, incidental choice of profession had a negative impact on identification levels [1]. Indeed, Dziubak and colleagues found that nearly 95% of nurses who had chosen their profession in an incidental manner were convinced of the appropriateness of their choice during practical training at health care centers [8].

For 85% of responders, obtaining a university diploma was one of the motives behind the decision to take up nursing studies. Starting from the beginning

of the 1990s, a growing trend in the number of college students has been observed in Poland [10]. Studies conducted in young responders by Zielińska demonstrated that education becomes an instrumental value in the young generation, facilitating the achievement of not only professional, but also of personal success [16]. In our study, the ease of enrollment was also included in the incidental motives; this factor was taken into account by a quarter of candidates. Personality traits have a huge impact on performance of professional duties as a nurse. Therefore, occupational preparation is important during the recruitment process, while it is essential to ensure that students' expectations regarding their future work are reasonable and realistic [13]. In 2016, the admission limit for nursing studies was 243 places to which a total of 654 candidates applied (an average of 2.7 per place). These data may suggest a large interest in nursing studies [7].

A total of 11.5% of the study group declared failure to qualify for other studies as a motive for taking up nursing. In the study conducted by Cipora et al. [1], the respective percentage was only 3.1%. However, it should be noted that all study fields applied for by the candidates fell within the category of health studies. This may suggest that young people guide their choice of studies based on a predisposition for health-related subjects. In the study conducted by Kropiwnicka et al., nursing students (65% of responders) declared that prior to being admitted to nursing studies, they had applied for admission to studies in other fields, with around half applying for medical studies. This confirms that nurs-

ing is not always the candidates' preferred field of studies, but demonstrates a general predisposition towards healthcare among prospective nursing students [11].

After analyzing the motives one may conclude that the decision of taking up studies in a certain field is guided by several factors of varied relative weight. To sum up the obtained results, it seems optimistic that the studies in nursing are chosen in line with personal interests, personality traits and the willingness to help others, despite the low levels of salaries in the profession. The Polish Nurses' Association has undertaken actions to promote the nursing profession, including the participation of nurses in radio and television shows, the "Nurse of the Year" contest, a movie contest for nursing students, and advice being provided through websites and journals available to the general public.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Autotelic motives were predominant in choices made by the candidates for nursing studies.
2. The age of the candidates, urban vs. rural residential status and the choice of nursing as the first field of studies were factors that significantly differentiated the motives for taking up the studies.
3. As part of the curriculum, the university should ensure that the newly enrolled students have adequate opportunities to expand their interests in the chosen profession and to satisfy their aspirations.

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