

*Dissertation abstract*

*"Safety and health management in the work of a general practitioner "*

*Jacek Marjański, MD*

Healthcare workers are a specific occupational group characterised by daily exposure to very diverse occupational hazards. These are hazards associated with dangerous (accidental), but also strenuous or harmful factors, which in turn include physical, biological, chemical and psychophysical factors. According to data from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, more than 10% of EU workers are employed in the health and social work, and a fairly high proportion of these workers work in hospitals. This sector is one of the largest employing sectors in Europe and includes a large group of different professions, including doctors, nurses and so-called auxiliary medical staff. It is a feminised sector, as 77% of the workforce is female. In addition, the healthcare sector has a 34% higher incidence rate of accidents at work than the EU average, and the sector itself is second only to construction in terms of the incidence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders. The main risk factors in the EU healthcare sector and the associated health problems are considered to be the musculoskeletal loads already mentioned, resulting from faulty working postures and incorrect lifting and carrying of loads. In addition, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) draws attention to biological agents, which have gained in strength and intensity of exposure over the last few years, notably through the Covid-19 virus. Research to date on occupational health and safety in the environment of healthcare workers, including doctors, undoubtedly indicates the presence of many and very varied risks, but this is still an underestimate.

In Poland, there is still a lack of reliable research on working conditions and identification of risks in health care, especially when it comes to the professional group of general practitioners. This is the professional group that is on the so-called "front line" of the relationship with the patient. Therefore, it is most exposed to what the literature calls "new and emerging" risks, which are often difficult to identify, analyse and assessment. It is also the group of doctors with the largest number of specialities of any other. Of all the professions, none has such a long, rich and documented history as the medical profession. Treated for centuries as a profession of choice, today it appears as a difficult profession, additionally burdened with increasing responsibility.

The motive for undertaking the topic of this dissertation is therefore an attempt to identify the hazards present in the work of primary care physicians (PHC), also known as

'general practitioners', and to analyse the factors that have a significant impact on occupational safety in the self-assessment of PHC physicians. The subject of the study will be Primary Health Care facilities operating in Poland.

The main objective of the study is to analyse and evaluate the occupational safety of 'general practitioners' (GPs) working in Primary Care settings.

The specific objectives, on the other hand, are:

- to identify the hazards present in the work of "GPs", using a survey questionnaire,
- analysis and evaluation of factors which influence the health and life of "GPs" in their opinion, with the help of a questionnaire,
- analysis and assessment of occupational stress of "GPs", with the help of a questionnaire, - analysis and assessment of occupational stress of "GPs", with the help of a questionnaire,
- assessment of the organisational culture prevailing in the facilities where "GPs" work, with particular reference to the management style, by means of a survey questionnaire,
- identification of occupational hazards in the work of "general practitioners", with particular emphasis on "new and emerging" hazards, with the help of a face-to-face interview conducted in POZ facilities in the Łódzkie Region.

The main elements that distinguish this work from others are:

- the number of respondents - 'general practitioners', who constitute the most numerous group of doctors in terms of specialisation,
- comprehensiveness of issues related to work safety - identification of hazards, influence of selected factors on work safety in the self-assessment of respondents, analysis and assessment of occupational stress, analysis and assessment of organisational culture with particular emphasis on management styles, identification of "new and emerging" hazards in post-security institutions in the Łódzkie Voivodeship,
- a high degree of detail - the results obtained from the data coming from the high level of detail - results obtained from the questionnaire will be confronted with results obtained from open observation supported by a face-to-face interview, which will be conducted in selected post-secondary healthcare institutions in the Łódź Province,
- relating the results obtained during the survey in Polish POZ facilities to trends prevailing in Europe, in the subject of the dissertation.

The methods used within the framework of the presented thesis were - a questionnaire and an observation with elements of a face-to-face interview, the results of which are a commentary

by the Author of the thesis on the subjective opinion of the respondents on the issues undertaken in the research. The tools that were used in this dissertation were - the author's survey questionnaire on the identification of occupational hazards in the work of "general practitioners" and the assessment of factors that affect occupational safety. In addition, a checklist by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions was used to analyse and assessment of occupational stress in the work of GPs, and a survey questionnaire by Cameron and Quinn, through which the current and desired state of organisational culture in the surveyed HCPs was analysed and assessed, with a particular focus on management style.

The study used statistical methods to analyse the (survey) data presented on an ordinal and nominal scale. Calculations and graphical illustrations were made using an Excel spreadsheet and the Statistica 12 statistical package.

The results of the literature studies and empirical research carried out are presented in four chapters of this thesis, and the layout of the thesis follows from the specific content scope. The first chapter deals with the importance of safety and health protection in health facility management. The nature, function and area of health facility management are reviewed. Management styles in health care facilities are discussed in detail, with a particular focus on the attitudes of superiors towards their subordinates and ways of motivating the work team. In addition, the first chapter presents an analysis of available reports on the level of safety and health protection in health care settings (both globally and in relation to national conditions) as well as on preventive and precautionary actions of the wider occupational safety policy.

The second chapter deals with factors influencing the safety and health protection of medical personnel. It presents a classification of occupational hazards, with a particular division into hazardous, onerous and harmful factors. In addition, the identification and analysis of 'new' and emerging' hazards in the work of medical personnel is made. At the end of chapter two, statistics on occupational diseases and accidents at work are presented globally and nationally, as well as ways to minimise them.

The third chapter focuses on the characterisation of safety and health protection at work of primary care physicians (general practitioners). It characterises the medical profession in Poland, statistical data and working conditions in the light of available reports and news items. Each theoretical chapter of the doctoral dissertation is concluded with a summary.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation contains own research conducted in primary health care centres (in the so-called POZs). The research methodology, the sampling procedure and the organisation of the research conducted are presented.

In the empirical (research) chapter, with the help of the author's survey questionnaire, the following was done:

- identification of hazards in the work of a "general practitioner",
- evaluation of factors influencing work safety and health protection of respondents,
- assessment of occupational stress at work of a "general practitioner",
- assessment of organisational culture with particular emphasis on the management style in primary care centres.

On the other hand, conducting open observation with elements of a face-to-face interview in selected primary care units in the Łódź Province, became a kind of commentary on the results of the questionnaires. For this part of the study, selected questions from the author's survey questionnaire were used. The dissertation concludes with an attempt to create a matrix of significant health and life risks for "general practitioners" and recommendations for "general practitioners" working in primary healthcare centres. The research carried out enabled the research objectives - main and specific.