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**Beata Tobiasz-Adamczyk, Monika Brzyska, Tomasz Grodzicki (eds.), *Neglect and Self-neglect of the Elderly. Medical and Social Determinants (Zaniedbanie i samozaniedbanie osób starszych). Medyczne i społeczne uwarunkowania*, Jagiellonian University Publishing House, Cracow 2019, 318 pp.**

The reviewed book summarises the research project *Neglect and Self-neglect of the Elderly – Challenges for the Formal and Informal Caregivers as well as for the Medical and Social Care Professionals in the Health care and Social Assistance System*, funded by the National Science Fund (OPUS 7, project grant nr 2014/13/B/NZ7/02300).

The book was written by the sociologists and medical doctors that work on the issues of old age and ageing. It consists of fifteen chapters and author's notes. There 318 pages in the book. The first chapter contains general information about the situation of the elderly in Poland. The second is focused on the detailed research methodology, and the chapters from 3 to 14 show the situation of the elderly with the specific accent on the persons indicating neglect and self-neglect based on the conducted research. The attention was paid to various aspects of the lives of the elderly, such as: diseases, housing conditions and the network of relationships. The last chapter, on the other hand, contains reflections on the results obtained in the study and the recommendations made.

The ageing of society represents multiple challenges on various levels for this society. One of such challenges is to overcome such form of violence as neglect and self-neglect of the elderly. The team's study included three groups of respondents: people aged 65 and over, living at home in the Małopolskie Voivodeship (2001 people, population-based study), hospital patients staying in Kraków and Sucha Beskidzka (585 people) and seniors benefiting from social assistance support in the Małopolskie Voivodeship (308 people).

In the first chapter titled *Neglect and Self-neglect in the Perspective of the Ageing Society (Demographic, Medical and Social Aspects)*, the authors pay attention to the concept of the *healthy ageing*, at the same time discussing the extent, to which it can be realized. They cite the results of previous research among Polish elderly people on their socio-demographic conditions.

Essential for the better understanding of the further analyses is the chapter on the *Research Methodology*, where the authors gave the detailed presentation of the selected methodology and the aim of the study. Their aim was to determine the frequency of neglect and self-neglect among the elderly and present them in a broader perspective (against the background of the selected social problems). The procedure for selecting people for the population-based study, weighing the sample and the calculation of weights were explained. There is also information on the hospitals and social welfare services, where the patients were studied. In the study, as a tool, an original questionnaire was used, which consisted of *Individual respondent's questionnaire*, *Alternative respondent questionnaire*, as well as *Assessment cards by the interviewer*.

In the chapter *Neglect and Self-neglect in the Context of the Demographic and Social Conditions* there are analyses of the research results concerning all groups in terms of the visible signs of neglect or self-neglect, which the researchers refer to in the following chapters. The publication contains many data tables, where the exact results of the research are presented. Moreover, there is an information included on whether the given results and correlations between the variables were statistically significant.

Chapters 4-14 have a similar structure of content presentation. At the beginning there is an overall presentation of a social problem (e.g. risky behaviour, violence, depression) or an aspect of life (e.g. quality

of life, housing conditions). The authors in this part have demonstrated a correct and extensive knowledge of the subject literature, both Polish and foreign. They also often cite the results of other studies that serve as supplements or comparisons. The next stage is to present the purpose of the research in a given area, a detailed presentation and discussion of the results and the presentation of conclusions. At the beginning, the scale of the phenomenon is presented in the context of the entire study group, then, depending on the chapter, a detailed analysis is carried out on groups of the elderly who, at the same time, show signs of neglect or have signs of self-neglect, and are divided by sex, and are divided into age groups.

Although a person of any age can experience violence, seniors belong to a group which, due to their physical limitations, diseases or little knowledge of where to seek help, has less chance of defending themselves (Sygulska 2015: 50-51). The problem of violence against the elderly is a phenomenon that researchers have been dealing with only recently. Every conducted research represents a significant contribution to the development of science.

In the chapter *Neglect and Self-neglect in the Context of Other Forms of Violence* the focus is put on the research of the correlation between experiencing various forms of violence and being neglected or self-neglected, that was explained in much details. Subsequent chapters are dedicated to various factors that influence the health condition. According to the research that was conducted in the 1980s these factors are the lifestyle (55%), environment (21%), heredity (16%) or healthcare (19%) (Nikuła 2011: 69). In the chapter *The functional Condition of the Elderly and Neglect and Self-neglect* the authors referred to the general health condition of the elderly and their daily functioning. The aim of the study was to check whether the actual status assessment scales used in geriatrics can be useful in identifying the risk of neglect or self-neglect. In this part, two scales were used to assess the functioning status of the subjects – Katz ADL scale and the complementary Lawton I-ADL scale. Their use made it possible to assess the extent to which a person is able to perform basic activities such as independent eating, washing or moving around.

In the next chapter titled *Chronic Diseases and Neglect and Self-Neglect* the authors discussed a problem that particularly affects the elderly, as the incidence of chronic diseases increases with age. Researchers looked at whether there was a relationship between the occurrence of chronic diseases and the experience of neglect or self-neglect. A list of 25 chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and cancer was compiled and their occurrence was explored. The obtained results were compared to similar studies conducted in the preceding years.

Chapter *The Condition of the Cognitive Function and Neglect and Self-neglect* refers to an area that still represent quite a challenge for specialists in various fields, especially medical science, as it concerns the issue of dementia, which is one of the cardinal causes of disability of the elderly (Gabryelewicz 2014: 17). In Poland, there is still a noticeable shortage in the field of the dementia research, that is why any mention of this topic is valuable for science. In their analysis the researchers used the cognitive assessment scale and the clock drawing test, which are screening tests for suspected dementia.

Mental health of the elderly people, and more specifically depression that affects people in this age group, was also discussed. Elderly people, in this phase of life, struggle with numerous difficult experiences, e.g. death of a loved one or disease. There may also be an accumulation of negative experiences that increase the risk of developing depression. The study should identify the scale of depression occurrence in the studied population and the answer was obtained on the basis of the applied geriatric depression scale (GDS).

As it was already mentioned, lifestyle is very important for the health, so it is important, among all, to follow a healthy diet and avoid addictions such as smoking or excessive alcohol consumption. In the chapter *Health risky behaviour and Neglect and Self-neglect* there was an emphasis on these addictions among the elderly, as well as the correlation between neglect or self-neglect and the frequency of the occurrence of these problems. Then in the chapter *Nutritional Condition and Behaviour related to Nutrition and Neglect and Self-neglect* researchers highlighted nutritional problems among the elderly that lead to malnutrition, overweight or obesity. They looked at whether these problems were more common among people with signs of neglect or self-neglect. The results were obtained thanks to the questions in the questionnaire as well as measuring the calf, arm, waist circumferences, weight and height that were used to calculate BMI.

Healthcare is also very important, and as the health deteriorates, people need more medical care. In the chapter *Neglect and Self-neglect and the Use of Medical Care* the authors examined the relationship between the frequency of using basic medical services and hospitalization and the available signs of neglect or self-neglect.

The quality of environment for the elderly includes, among others, living conditions that become more important as ageing progresses and more time is spent at home. The reason is the lack of need to go to work as well as your health worsens. Researchers wanted to find out in what conditions the Polish elderly people live and whether it is correlated with the risk of neglect or self-neglect. In this part of the study, the interviewers played an important role as they assessed the housing conditions on the basis of the prepared questionnaire.

Ageing experiences also include interpersonal relationships, that were analysed in the chapter "The network of social relations and neglect and self-neglect". Research shows that the network range depends in whether someone has a spouse, parents, children, grandchildren, friends or neighbours and whether one can count on them when needed. These elements affect the quality of life enormously. At this stage, the COURAGE SNI (COURAGE Social Network Index) scale was used. Additionally the respondents were asked to evaluate the overall quality of life, using the WHOQOL-AGE scale (a scale created on the basis of the EUROHIS-QOL and WHOQOL-OLD scales).

The above exploration was intended to outline the issues that were raised in the monograph and to encourage readers to familiarize with it in its entirety, because despite the picture by Vincent van Gogh *Sorrowing Old Man* presented on the cover, suggests that book touches really difficult and important topics, it is worth reading. The research presented in the book shows the variety of research tools used, multidimensionality and a broad view of the problem. Undoubtedly, it raises an important topic and contributes to the enrichment of knowledge about the form of violence represented by neglect and self-neglect. This knowledge may be particularly useful for people working in social welfare institutions and other units dealing with the elderly. It is crucial to alert that neglect or self-neglect may be related to other problems.

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