

**Opponent report of the dissertation of Dr. László Horváth, MA:  
"Social assistance to disabled children and their families"**

Author submitted work in English on 117 pages, 132 pages plus 9 citation literature. In the theoretical part of the thesis a number of chapters and subchapters are devoted to the new paradigm of health and social care for people with disabilities, their integration and international documents and defines the Hungarian legislative. He also pays attention to the modern trends of social assistance. The next chapter deals with changes in families with disabled members and finally focuses to the research part.

The author defines research objectives and hypotheses and describes the methodology. Achievements are interpreted in details in the discussion and brings conclusions for practice.

Results come from the analysis process of 339 questionnaires which were answered by 86.1% of women and only 13.9% of men. Interesting and positive findings according the oponent are that there were 70.5% of handicaped children living with parents and 21.8% of parents take care of their children by themselves.

Thesis at the content and form fullfils the requirements of the university.

The duty of an opponnet is to oppose and ask questions:

1. How did you select the respondents, describe the method of the choice.
2. You got answers mostly from women, mothers, did you have the opportunity to confront the attitudes of both parents, or did you consider them to be identical with the view of the partner?
3. The positive outcome is considered by the opponnet that 70.5% of the affected children lived with their families, and 21,8% of the parents took care of their children by themselves. What kind of care was given to the rest of children? Were these children mostly not so heavy handicaped or there were not possibilities of help of the health care professionals, psychologists, special pedagogists and social workers?

4. What kind of financial support is provided by the state to those parents, who take care of their disabled children by themselves?

5. If children live in the institutions, how are their parents involved in the economic security of children in cooperation with institutions, public or private?

6. The prenatal diagnosis can detect early developmental defect. What is the percentage of parents, who decide for abortion and what is the percentage of parents who decide for delivery of the child even they know about its possible disability?.

These issues do not reduce the value of the work and are more likely to develop the discussion.

Finally opponent recommends after a successful defense Ph.D. is given to Dr. László Horváth.

Bratislava, 17.04.10

prof. MD. Šoltés Ladislav, DSc. Dr.h.c.



## **Opponent's opinion about the dissertation**

**Student:** doc. Dr. László Horváth, MA.

**Title of the dissertation:**

Social Help for Disabled Children and their Families

**Consulent's name:** doc. PhDr. Adéla Mojžíšová, Ph.D.

**Opponent's name:** Prof. Dr. Zsolt Lukácskó Ph.D.

### **Evaluation**

#### **The topic actuality**

A topic of current concern of the profession was chosen. Its hypotheses and answers of latest type will surely be welcomed both by the involved ones and those who are ready to tackle these issues. Almost all over the world and in several countries of Europe, similar economic, societal and social problems such as recession, transformation of the health care system, social reorganization, decrease of the population need to be solved and this thesis gives responds to issues of high uncertainty, interprets notions at societal level making it possible to be accepted and understood much better.

Harassed by the present societal and social problems, people not involved in any aspects of disability might think that these hypotheses refer only to a narrow layer. However, besides its timeliness and importance for the profession, the way this thesis has been worked out makes its value inevitable.

#### **Goals of the research**

As it is posed in the title, the goal of the research work was to call people's attention to disabled children and to highlight the responsibilities of their immediate and wider surroundings.

Seemingly the thesis addresses professionals of the field, but it also puts on accent on the responsibility of the whole society.

This research work examines a segment of the world of people living with disabilities from the viewpoint of the social sphere aiming to ease the difficulties of and burdens laid on a family caring for a disabled child.

It is a proper attitude to narrow down the complex issue into three groups: whether they get access to the services of health and social care in the family or in the institution, furthermore it searches for the methods to involve parents as active partners. Finally, as an output of the research work a training programme for professionals is compiled.

Although it is neither articulated nor emphasized there is also an indirect goal of the thesis, worked out in an excellent way, namely the necessity of shift in paradigms which helps to apply a late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to the problem and it really is of key importance.

The goals of the research are clear, explicit and timely. In our modern world where the family model and structure of the family are constantly changing, the social and health care systems are struggling with troubles, where solutions are hindered by infringement of the norms, the author is able to give a clear picture of the situation and offer a route to be followed.

Concerning the whole thesis, the author has reached the goals. As a matter of fact, even if some further questions could be raised and some statements could be discussed, the hypotheses and the answers to them are all valid.

All the direct goals articulated at the beginning of the thesis have been reached and some further goals have also been set up. Concerning any research paper to find and set up new goals is a success since they may inspire the author to go on researching.

All in all, the goals are realistic and achievable – the answers to the questions are scientifically grounded, objective and accurate.

### **New results achieved in the dissertation**

The research paper surprises the reader with several novelties.

Firstly, the author relying on the technical literature of late 20<sup>th</sup> applies approaches of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century to the problems.

He highlights and explains several rudiments and questions raised by the profession which simplify the problems and help to understand them. Even if the new paradigms of the health and social care systems are known, the paradigms put into the focus of the thesis dealing with disability in order to make the topic known for the general public seems to be extremely efficient.

On page 50, it emphasizes all the principles which make an original and recent approach to the problems.

The way it presents the changes in the function and structure of families is of new type and significantly influences the elaboration of the problem.

It offers a new approach which is emphasized throughout the thesis.

For the professionals it provides new information about the process of self-sufficiency, the way as services built on each other, and figures of the research summarized in 15 points and recommended to the profession.

It is unusual for a thesis of social science to involve a health issue in details, and still it reveals how versatile the author is.

Finally, the training programme presented in the last part which is built on theoretical knowledge and offered for professionals proves to be a worthy ending of the thesis.

### **Opponent's personal opinion**

The candidate has proved his thorough knowledge of and familiarity with the field while elaborating the topic.

On the basis of modern technical literature and with the help of a comprehensive survey, involving a large number of cases 36 settlements and 339 respondents, the candidate has set up hypotheses, analysed the problem and drawn the right conclusions which are well established. The scientific significance of the thesis is enhanced by the correct statistical data process which also proves his skills in this field. The 38 tables and 13 charts make the thesis more colourful so that the reader could enjoy the topic, which otherwise might seem difficult to comprehend.

### **Ending**

This thesis is recommended for the final exam (oral defence)  
This thesis is recommended to award a Ph.D. degree at South Bohemia University.

### **Conclusion**

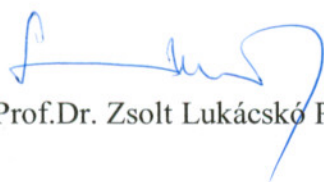
With this thesis the candidate proves the knowledge he has gained in the doctoral programme and all the requirements has been fulfilled.

I do recommend his obtaining the Ph.D. degree.

Date:

Nyíregyháza, 28 April 2010

Signature



Prof. Dr. Zsolt Lukácskó PhD



**VYSOKÁ ŠKOLA  
ZDRAVOTNÍCTVA A SOCIÁLNEJ PRÁCE  
SV. ALŽBETY, N. O.**

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811 02 Bratislava

**DISSERTATION READER'S OPINION**

**Topic:** Social assistance to children with health handicaps and their families

**Postgraduate student:** Dr. László Horváth

**Dissertation reader:** Prof. PhDr. Alžbeta Mrázová, PhD. MPH.

The researched issue of the submitted Dissertation is **highly relevant**. László Horváth, the postgraduate student, set as **goal** of his Dissertation to ascertain dependences on new paradigms, when and to what extent handicapped children get health and social care and to what extent parents, institutions, legislation and the clients themselves can engage in such assistance. Further, on the base of the research results, to suggest actions that would improve the life quality of handicapped children and possibly, in the scope of proposals, prepare so called "training program" for experts who deal not only with handicapped children but also with their families.

The author segmented the Dissertation traditionally in the theoretical and the research parts. The **theoretical part** analyzes, in two main sections and the relevant subsections, the new approaches in health and social care for handicapped children, the principles of standardization, integration and timely diagnostics, as well as the identification of handicaps. The author has correctly included also the legislative frame of the laws of the Republic of Hungary and of the regulations governing the possibilities of care and claims for handicapped children and their families into the theoretical chapter. The whole legislative frame is in continuity with the international agreements and declarations of human rights of citizens with health handicaps and the Declaration on the Right of the Child.

But I consider extraordinarily beneficial the **research part** of the Dissertation, particularly the findings related to verification of the fifth hypothesis where the author states that "timely diagnosis" for handicapped children is made only in 65,2% before third year of age, which is almost legally punishable. It is not admissible for the paediatrician or the nurse (when the child goes to the physician at least with a viral infection) not to notice some "disproportion",

i.e. any deviation from “the norm” or age – in adequacy. Even nurses must be more perceptive for example to inadequate behaviour of the children (how they see or hear, whether they have adequate mimics, speech, mobility...).

Some hypotheses were logically confirmed in compliance with other studies and are generally known already (e.g. H/7 that families with handicapped children are more overstrained with the ones with healthy children and that they do not have sufficient funds for recreation and trips also for economic reasons).

I can state that the author has chosen adequate form of ascertainment of information and data; the method of questionnaire and the number of respondents is proportionate to the set tasks and goal of the research.

From **formal perspective**, the Dissertation has 117 pages of text with good arrangement, 38 charts, 14 diagrams and 130 correctly quoted literary sources.

From **contents perspective**, the Dissertation meets the relevant criteria, the individual sections have sufficient meaning value and gradation; the research part has met the set goals and described even a proposal of actions.

**Conclusion: The submitted Dissertation meets the criteria set for this type of written qualification works; I recommend it for plea and I agree with the award of the degree of**

**Philosophiae doctor (Ph. D.)**

**after its successful plea.**

In Bratislava, 20.04.2010

Prof. PhDr. Alžbeta Mrázová, PhD. MPH., *v.r.*  
Dissertation Reader

Questions:

1. I miss daily sanatoriums or facilities for day sojourn in the suggested actions (services), which would be optimal both for handicapped children and for their families. (It may have been caused by translation). What is it really like?
2. I venture arguing against the wording of the 4<sup>th</sup> hypothesis, or better I do not consider it sufficient. The affirmation that “in case of a handicapped children, there is higher number of children in the family than in common population” should be completed (and it is no problem, on the base of the questionnaires) by the statement that it is very probably the case of families with lower social status – and probably also with lower education.
3. I agree with the author’s final statement that the child should develop firstly in his or her own family, but institutions are also needed. Handicapped children and youth need both the family and the company of peers, and integrated place for family relations must be created in the life of the institutions.