

### **“Health is a precious thing”**

– presentation of findings of the researches over ill children, with the help of unfinished sentences.

Prepared text is an interpretation of findings of researches, which were conducted between ill children, healed in the Voivodeship Specialist Hospital for Children in Olsztyn, in 2001. Researches were conducted with the help of the sheet of unfinished sentences. The content of the elaboration encloses associations of children concerning *inter alia* sickness, health and future, which may be helpful in the work with a sick or hospitalized child.

#### **Procedure of conduction and interpretation of the research.**

The sheet consisted from 28 unfinished sentences. Proposition of fulfilling of the task had a character of a request. Children supplemented sentences in the free time, not to be felt as observed. What is more, to the participants of the researches it was directed a request for the independent fulfilling of the task. Time of the research was not specified. Sentences were grouped and numbered into thematic categories, for the entire interpretation to be possible.

1. Health and illness – sentences: 12,14,19, 25,26,27,28
2. Emotions – sentences: 1,3,5,6,9, 11
3. Future – sentences: 8,10,15,23,24
4. Values and dreams – sentences: 2,13,20,21,22
5. Family – sentences: 16,17,18
6. Remaining sentences – sentence: 7.

Sorted sentences were subjected to the quality analysis. Generally, with researches embraced was group of children in the age of 11 to 17. Kids remained in the Hematological and Oncological Ward– 15 persons (7 girls, 8 boys) and on the Internal Ward– 12 persons (8 girls and 4 boys). Research material stated created a small group kids, which is why collected conclusions may be only treated as suggestions.

#### **Presentation of the findings**

By analysis of the first mentioned category, one may find following associations to sentences:

“When I am in the hospital..”– my mood goes bad; I want to go out faster; I’ve got different examinations; I am nervous; I regret I am not in home; I miss my friends; I have to heal; I cannot meet my friends; and something different - I meet new people. From the cited statements it appears a matter of the mood change, yearning for home and daily and “ordinary” activity.

Girls and boys bind the disease with its affections, the process of the treatment, accompanying sometimes characteristic mood and special diet, and even the colour. Associations of the leukemia ill children, being the completion of the sentence „My disease associates me with...” are as following: bruises; injections; with something unpleasant; with the long treatment; the pain; with the physical limitation; the red colour. Similar associations had children from different groups: the death; sadness; diet, injections; the cripplehood trolley; steroids, with something very terrible; the measurement of the sugar; with sweets; also appeared had different - with the television advertisement; with the CD that does not work.

During stay in hospital, children do not like: morning incentives (6 persons); investigations, injections and drips (7 persons); medicines (3 persons); post itself (3 persons) and reigning atmosphere and hospital meals (3 persons). There also special answer has appeared, and namely - „ (...) I do not like the nurses who do not have the calling”. You should notice that children from the hematological and oncological group gave answers connected with the process of the treatment mainly - medicines and atmosphere in the hospital.

In what level does the disease disturb children? Leukemia illness disturbs on the good mood, in achievement of the profession, development of interests connected with the sport, as well as disturbs in the usually preferred appearance - the lack of the hair after chemotherapy. One of examined young girls wrote that the disease disturbs her „literally in all she does not participate in many various activities by the disease about which mention contemporaries, when there is the opportunity of the visits. Five of examined persons - (2 young girls and 3 boys) do not perceive the difficulty in the disease. Children from other groups see difficulties, mainly caused by the disease, in learning, propelling and walking to school (5 persons), in everyday life (3 persons), in happiness (1 person).

Almost all examined children define their disease properly. They qualified it as: thrombocytopenia, leukemia, inflammation of lymph nodes, leukemia, diabetes, the fracture of the spine. Only one boy gave the little precise answer – “I am ill on legs”. Knowledge of children in own disease one may see in the interest of children in state of the health, and in

the face of this one's disease one can also allege doctors subjective approach to the patients who inform them about the disease, in way adapted to their possibility, which proves good relation of patient and doctor.

Feelings of the ill children, when they talk about their disease, are changing. You should however mark that negative feelings overweigh in the decided majority - sadness (they feel the unpleasantness, they want to cry, they feel bad). There had appeared such statements: „Thought about my disease irritates me"; „When I talk about my disease, then I begin differently to think about myself". They are however different - more optimistic associations like: I feel healthier; this is the normal matter for me; I hope that I will recover quickly. Yet, one can find also such as: „ When I tell about my disease, this is when I wonder when she came into being" (young girl of 15 years), „When I tell about my disease, nobody wants to believe" (boy of 12 years), „When I talk about my disease, everyone listens" (11 years, 16 years).

Feelings which appeared in the relationship with the analyzed sentence dependent are surely from many factors, from among which one can distinguish these, which are in the child itself and the ones that relate to disease and the process of the treatment.

Who, according to children, helps them in the hospital most? Consoling is that, according to examined children in the hospital, everyone helps them - starting from parents, doctors, nurses and friends, ending on religious feelings - the belief, the God and science and filled with play - time. Also helps the conversation, sustaining „the proper spirit" and good mood. Diversity of the answers in view of the sex shows that young girls emphasize role of different persons, however boys mention additionally about different helpful actions.

Health was qualified by all the children as: valuable, important thing and happiness. Here are some associations: it is a valuable thing; the most important point of the life; one can do nothing without Him; the best thing what can be; the mood of the organism; this happiness, one of the most important features of the life; the valuable thing which by foolishness one can lose (the most often as nourishment); the medicine for the life; gold; I do not know how to explain this.

As it follows from the introduced associations, health becomes value placed on the very apex itself of the hierarchy. About the importance of the health prove also other sentences, which did not suggest such answer, as they appeared.

What is there the kids' way of fight with the pain? The most frequent way of suffering of the pain turns out to be: the conversation with different persons - parents, nurses or doctor (7 persons). Next they are: the analgesic centers, compression of teeth and

lying in bed (5 persons). Children write, that the disease causes them to be irradiated, crying and shouting (2 person), and even the lock to oneself and sadness (2 person). One young girl, when feels the pain, tries to draw aside thinking from the pain.

What examined children do fear most? The analysis of associations lets affirm, that children phobia is not steered on the disease exclusively, and it also concerns many different objects. Such dependence exists both in children healed in the hematological-oncological group, as in other. Ill young girls for the leukemia fear: injections, their future, this, „that I still will live with the thought about the disease“, „I fear to grow“. Boys' phobias concern: diseases, investigations, tests, and even sincerity, to watch horrors.

The associations of the sentence: „I do not like ....“ related to the names of dishes, action - walking to school, dentist, their disease and hospital. They appeared in three statements: school objects - biology and mathematics and the features of the character - the intolerance and caddishness.

The next sentence was related with children safety. Namely, they do feel at home with the family best and most safely - 19 persons gave such answer (in this, 1 person living in the Orphanage), 3 persons tied this thought with people for them significant - their friends. In turn, 2 boys with the „loose“ dress - I „feel in 'loose' pieces of clothing as best“. Ill children on the leukemia are happy and merry, when they spend time with family (2 persons), when they are with friends and within the contemporaries presence (5 persons), when all goes as they think (4 persons), when someone visits them (1 person), when they receive good opinions or marks (1 person), when they play well (1 person). The feeling of happiness and cheerfulness gives to remaining children health and favorable matters (12 persons).

Children define future in the diverse way. They associate it with the time which is before them, with hope on better days, with further safe life, as a thing that one can name as the gift from the God and happiness, with the riddle, and even with their profession. Two persons did not give the answer.

Thoughts about family and future, which appeared in examined children, prove about the validity of these matters for them. Writing about the future they also bind it with health, effort put in the science and education, and also happiness, parents, doctors and God. All examined ones, both girls and boys have the feeling of the control over their future because they make it addicted to them.

The wishes about which children write also relate with the health - mentioned many times, family, friends, sometimes money, belief and education. It was found also a different wish, relating to „a computer 100 gigabytes, flat in castle and large pool“.

And what dreams they have? Children majority dreams about good health (24 persons), obviously. School and life only are most important and most valuable only for 3 children. Boy's (12 years) statement is significant, as it goes: "I dream about all children in the world to be healthy".

Undertaken by children tries to focus around the good mood, positive thinking, good opinions, control of the life in the interesting way and on this, to all go as better and to be better than previous day.

Examined children families were limited in the sheet limited to parents – mother and father. Children defined them, as:

"Mum" - indulgent, good, loving, always present, sensitive, brave and strong.

"The papa" - nice, helping, important, dear, „super painter", „tall", „the best in the world", strong, wise, talented, friend, „even guy", faultless, „My Papa is for me very important. I love Him and respect him"; in the statements occur information concerning the excessive helping out by the parents. Here is such statement: „My Papa is nice, he understands me, but he still treats as small child". Such relation or attitude to the child is not profitable because it limits „permissible" effort and the ill child's activity.

Examined also had to finish the different sentence „the best way to/on..." attributed to the category „Remaining sentences". Most often mentioned were: boredom (10 persons), pain (6 persons), happiness (2 persons), and sadness (2 persons). As ways of managing dominated: friends company, reading, music, thinking, medicines, doctor and prayer. It is worth to connect both parts of the sentence and then read as follows:

„The best way on boredom is the reading" (6 persons); „the best way on boredom is to go with friends for the walk" (4 persons); „the best way for the pain is thinking about something pleasant" (1 the person); “ the best way for the pain are medicines and doctor" (5 persons); „the best way for happiness is prayer and belief in oneself" (2 persons), „ the best way on sadness is laughter" (1 the person); “ the best way on sadness is conversation and good music" (1 person).

Completion of this sentence disclosed the emotions in some way, interests and needs of the children, which one can use as clues in the educator's work with the hospitalized child. Because, organization of „life" - science, amusement and free time on the ward is not an easy task. One should observe various signals flowing from children, for they can be valuable clues for us in the work. Hospitals or healing centers should „pulsate with life", which will satisfy the need of love, safety and social contacts. All workers of the hospital fulfilling medical care and beside-medical care should show love and heart, by what they will create the atmosphere of confidence and optimism. The child's hospitalization should not threaten his

developmental both in the psychical, physical or social sphere, it should not be the unpleasant experience. The child should unceasingly receive the manifold support from parents, colleagues and the closest persons. Its happiness is related with the satisfaction of needs: social contacts, achievements and activity (J. Wyczesany, T. M. Ostrowski, Z. Lohn 2000). Any lack of this creates the threat, that the child in the disease and during the conducted treatment feels lonely.

#### References:

1. Wyczesany J., Ostrowski T. M., Lohn Z., Indywidualne i społeczne czynniki determinujące aktywny udział dzieci chorych w procesie leczenia. Kraków 2000.