

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with a very sensitive issue, such as the area of care of terminally ill and dying children. The fundamental theme of this thesis is the needs of parents during the care of a terminally ill child. The main purpose of this thesis is to map the needs of parents who are caring for their terminally ill child and to find out how their needs change during the course of their child's illness, dying and after death. An equally important aim is to find out how services providing children's palliative care respond to parents' needs and how parents assess the level of care provided. The thesis is divided into theoretical and empirical parts.

In the introductory chapter of the theoretical part of the thesis, attention is paid to a general introduction to the field of dying and death. The following chapters deal with palliative care and the specifics of paediatric palliative care and the ways in which this care is provided in the Czech Republic. Another important topic of the theoretical part of the thesis is the area of human needs and their satisfaction. In the conclusion of the thesis the impact of a serious illness on the child and on the family of the sick child is also described.

The empirical part of the thesis is devoted to qualitative research, which was carried out using semi-structured interviews with parents of terminally ill children. Based on the interpretation and analysis of the interviews, it is subsequently described how the parents cope with the whole situation during the treatment, death and after the death of the child and whether they are offered an adequate form of support throughout the entire period of care. The findings from this research could be used in further developments in the provision of paediatric palliative care.

Keywords: terminally ill child, children's palliative care, dying, death, family, human needs, parents' needs