ABSTRACT

This thesis examines patient recruitment in clinical trials.

It is a current and pressing issue, which is not sufficiently embedded in the thinking of doctors and patients, their patterns of communication, and more broadly in the traditional doctor-patient relationship, which continues to be burdened by post-socialist paternalism. The formal framework and ethics have been developed relatively recently, and their application causes confusion to all participants regarding how to proceed in specific situations. In addition, the choice of topic, and especially the form of dealing with the topic, was motivated by the relative lack of academic resources and publications in the field.

The theoretical section of the thesis defines clinical research and its phases, and introduces basic terminology and documents closely linked to clinical research. In addition, it focuses on research ethics, thoroughly examining the issue of informed consent – a fundamental document necessary for recruiting a patient in a clinical trial. Finally, one chapter of the thesis focuses on the issue of medical literacy, the level of which is integral to the participants' understanding of the importance of clinical research, and directly affects participants' decision-making.

The empirical section is divided into two parts. The first part is comprised of interviews with medical professionals. The interviews were used to examine the role of the doctor in the process of patient recruitment in clinical trials. In addition, the doctors were asked to elaborate on their approaches to discussing problematic aspects of trials, and approaches to telling patients the full truth about a trial (e.g. the possible use of placebo). The second part consists of interviews with patients, and focuses mainly on patients' experiences of enrolment into clinical trials, how they were encouraged to participate, and the specifics of the dialogue with their doctor regarding informed consent.

The dialogue between a doctor and a patient is crucial to reaching a cooperation agreement between the two parties.

Research was conducted using the method of Grounded Theory. Open coding was used primarily to observe doctor-patient dialogue methods, patients' motivation to enrol, and to identify specifically what was important in a given context.

Key words: clinical research, recruitment, informed consent, placebo, ethics