

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

I appreciate this opportunity to share my belief in the renaissance of spirituality in nursing care with you. Until the recent past, expressions of spirituality among the nations of Eastern and Central Europe may have been complicated by the political restrictions and socialist order imposed on them. As in the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Marxist-Leninist atheism was enforced under the Soviet regime, severely inhibiting the spiritual and religious expression of their citizens both in everyday life and in health care. Discussion about spirituality in medicine and nursing care only revived in the early 1990's, mostly with the development of palliative care and the reorganisation of national health care systems immediately after the independence of these nations had been restored.

There is still no consensus on a formal definition of spirituality or even whether it should be defined. Šeškevičius, one of the main figures in Lithuanian academic nursing and, recently, in the development of palliative care, describes spirituality as a person's organizing core or centre. Much to his regret, 'modern day globalization, aggressive secularization and the spiritual poverty of consumer society more and more dwarf spiritual values and the Christian traditions of our people – those values that we need to preserve in order to endure life's crises' (Šeškevičius, 2013).

To be clear, spirituality as a dimension of health and health care has not fit well with the usual rational or objective medical paradigm that focuses on the physical demands of illness and treatment (Rumbolt, 2003). Nevertheless, nursing tradition goes beyond the medical to integrate the physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions of patients' lives in care. This holistic paradigm prioritizes and guides nurses towards a careful assessment and response to the place of spirituality in the patient's repertoire.

To the best of my belief, the *Central European Journal of Nursing and Midwifery* is an eligible and respectable platform in which nursing researchers can expand the empirical evidence of the increasingly explored concept of spirituality in nursing care and its defining characteristics. Registered nurses need this knowledge in order to support and facilitate the understanding of patients as individual persons, their health conditions and care needs, or even, in the case of terminal illness, to understand its meaning and prepare for its consequences. Faced with the globalization of health care, student nurses also require the correct education and information about socio-cultural, religious and spiritual customs and practices if they are to offer a sensitive, patient-centered, biopsychosocial-spiritual model of care.

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