Title of the Thesis:
The role of means of Public Transport for the mobility of patients with Parkinson’s disease - A comparative study between Parkinson’s patients, otherwise neurologically afflicted patients and healthy control subjects

Author: Univ. Prof. DDr. C. N. Homann, PhD, MBA, MSc

The presented thesis addresses issues of the quality of life in patients with neurological deficits, specifically those dealing with Parkinson Disease (PD). Paper focuses on patients’ mobility, the possibility of using public transportation and resolves issues related to their safety risks in connection to using public transport (PT). The defined problem is certainly tangible for monitoring but also for the intervention. It is interesting from the perspective of the individual patient with PD but also as a concern for revealed gap in public health.

Author introduces fundamental aspects of discomfort in patients with PD related to the use of public transportation. The overview is supported by an adequate list of the available research studies supplemented with erudite commentary.

The introductory section is followed with the description of methods and objectives of the research part of the work. The aim of the study was to find out the occurrence of the use of PT, the risks involved of using PT and the consequences of and factors associated with not using PT in patients with PD. The sample included in the study consisted from 228 PD patients, 239 neurological patients without PD and 108 healthy controls were. Data was collected with the help of a self-designed questionnaire and also other standard tools. The methods and methodology is well elaborated and relevant to the aim of the study. The statistical methods chosen are relevant to the type of analysed data. Based on the results from the research, fair conclusions are formulated emphasizing the importance of PT for growing number of PD patients and unaddressed need to develop and initiate programs to make the use of PT both more attractive and safe.

Summary of relevant information about traffic safety at global, European, regional and local levels represents the valuable part of the thesis mostly from the PH perspective. Inspirative (primarily for Slovak conditions) are recommendations of programs and campaigns, including the design of practical methods for the prevention of falls in at-risk PD groups (information tools, trainings, environment modification). This represents a valuable insight into the issue from the dedicated professional.

Formally, the work is presented at a good quality level, easy to read with relevant illustrations, flowcharts and diagrams used appropriately. Nevertheless, it should be noted that small inaccuracies in the cited sources (p. 237) and lay out are present.

In the view of proven quality of the thesis the presented habilitation meets the criteria set for this kind of written work. Thus, I suggest the committee to endorse the thesis and after fulfilling all the necessary formalities I recommend to grant the candidate the academic title “Associate Professor of Public Health”.

Prof. Viera Rusnáková, MD, CSc. MBA

Bratislava 4.5.2013