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Current Opinions of Doctors and Decisional Factors on the Migration of the Romanian Physicians: A Study of Several Mass-Media Statements

Elena TOADER¹

Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the phenomenon of migration of the physicians from the perspective of the medical specialist, with the adaptation of the instruments characteristic for sociology. Through this endeavor we try to identify the magnitude of the phenomenon, the pattern of migration for the Romanian physicians, the opinions of the decision factors and the conceptual model of the migrating physician.

Keywords: *migration; opinions; physicians; decision factors; media.*

Introduction

The migration of the physicians is an important subject both in the public agenda and in the political debate area, especially in the last decade, on a national and European level. In the expression of the current opinions on the migration of the physicians, the media uses a connected terminology such as “globalization”, “economic context”, “juridical context”, “social context” and “ethical values system”. Within this framework, this paper investigates the opinions, attitudes and assessments of the physicians and the decision factors on the phenomenon of migration of the Romanian physicians, such as they appear outlined in the media, from an interdisciplinary approach based on quantitative analysis methods adjusted for the medical domain. We believe that the novelty element for this work is represented by the adaptation of these instruments specific for sociology to the medical domain. The structure of the material is focused on the presentation of

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the contemporary context of the migration of the Romanian physicians, building through the economic, legal, social and ethical issues the context from which the media draws the information. From a methodological point of view we introduced the vision of the medical specialist, by the adaptation of the instruments specific for sociology, especially in order to efficiently valorize the experience of the migrating doctor at the interface between medicine and sociology.

The migration of the physicians in the contemporary context

In the pluralist definition of the contemporary globalization, Rennen and Martens (2003) discern in the complexity of the phenomenon economical, juridical, social and ethical aspects which characterize the relationship between globalization and healthcare (Maud et al, 2005). In a *globalized world* that intensifies and renders unavoidable close contacts between different societies the migration of the physicians is confronted with the concurrent opposition between the “urge” to emigrate (supported in the decisional context by various motivations, from financial ones to professional achievement opportunities) and the issues generated by its management, such as the integration in a cultural diversity founded on rights and inalienable individual freedoms (Koehn, 2006).

In the juridical context, the migration of the physicians centers on considerations on the human rights, focusing on arguments referring to the right to free circulation of the individuals in the EU space, regulated by bilateral agreements, regulations, treaties and directives adopted by Romania as a member of the EU (2007). For the healthcare professionals, the mutual recognition of the diplomas and qualifications, especially of the conformity certificate for physicians, allows the placement within a juridical legitimate space, with access to the professionally oriented work market (Directive of the EC 2005/36).

The economical domain provides an explanatory model for this migration through the pull/push factors (Buchan 2008), integrated in various analyses of cumulative causality. The economic domain relies on the fact that, in many cases, the migration is a quick solution for solving certain problems: gaining and generating resources, the possibility of achievement or reconfiguration of the professional trajectory, but also of the social status, supplying the necessity of medical professionals in certain OECD states which after 2000 confronted or are confronting with the lack of working force (OCDE, 2010; Forcier et al., 2004).

From the ethical point of view, the migration of the physicians within the globalization context presumes efforts towards the development of a conceptual model of integrated understanding for all the key components and processes involved, including the areas of social justice, well-being, non-harming, individual autonomy. It is important to clarify the manner by which the migrating physician can maintain his own values but also the authentic respect for a large variety of beliefs, values, traditions and experiences resulted from numerous

social circumstances (Stilwell et al., 2003). The migration signifies the adaptation to the new social and cultural environment and the integrating approaches as well as the embracement of the pluralism within the globalization context are actions directed towards the essence of the ethical principles of autonomy, freedom, equity and legal considerations on the human rights (Martens, 2011).

The social component brings in the migration debate area the force of the social connections, the merge between the economical and professional factors being predominant (Anghel, 2009). In the Romanian space the migration of the physicians entrains in the discussion field aspects that allow for the apparition of subthemes and confer alternate meanings such as the social recognition of the profession, the satisfaction degree of the physicians in the system, the professional standards, professional trajectory, and personal time.

The media brings the issue of the migration of the physicians to the social attention, imposing it to the debate with thematic central lines such as the magnitude, the tendencies of the phenomenon and the motivation to migrate (DiMagio, 2001; Bandura, 2001). In a context where the words such as globalization, *European integration* became slogans of the day, the role of the media becomes more and more important in the real process of integration and a subject more and more discussed by the countries involved in this process at the level of the EU (WMR, 2011). The current media practice proves the raised interest for the approach of the issues generated by the migration of the physicians. An example is the report of The Healthcare Systems Unit, General Directorate for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO), European Commission), which estimates that by 2020 in the healthcare domain there will be recorded a 1,000,000 workers deficit and almost 15% from the necessary care will not be covered. This is the reason for which we believe that the role of the media as a main source of information became much more important in the last decades and it is worth investigating its role in the formation of the representations on the phenomenon of migration of the physicians. We expect the media to protrude in the real aspects of the migration of the Romanian physicians and to offer if possible solutions to the multiple issues generated.

The aim of this paper is to present the current opinions of the physicians and of the decision factors, such as they were expressed in the media, on the dimensions, tendencies and most relevant aspects on the migration of the Romanian doctors. In order to maximize the relevance referring to the migration of the Romanian doctors we followed how the media can reveal the reciprocal interaction between the opinions of the decision factors and those of the physicians.

The objectives of this research were on the first hand to present the magnitude of the phenomenon, defined by dimension, diversity and dynamics.

The second objective was to identify the migration patterns. We investigated the way by which the synthesis of the main professional, personal and social

implications, with a special emphasis for the role of the ethical aspects, manage to reveal the motivations that determine the physicians to go and work abroad.

The third objective was connected to the creation of thematic guidelines, a dialogue between the migrating physicians and the decision factors in the health-care system. Through the approach from a double perspective of the same events we aimed to obtain data which allow the identification of *connection bridges* between these two characters, but also to assess the degree of similarity or differentiation between the perceptions of the physicians and of the healthcare decision factors on the migration of the Romanian physicians.

The fourth objective was to develop a conceptual model for the migrating doctor, as a scientific instrument for the representation of realities which, through their complexity, surpass the capacity of grasp of the intuition or logic with which we control reality. Starting from the systematization of the approaches in the communication of the opinions of the doctors and of the decision factors on the migration phenomenon, we took into consideration to what extent the media discourse tries to integrate them into a global model.

Starting from the argument that the study of the migration of the physicians in the contemporary context seeks to develop a better understanding of the specific of this phenomenon, *the main question brought into the discussion is to what extent the media manages to reveal the real causes of the phenomenon and how it could contribute to establish the measures necessary for the management of this phenomenon?*

Also, we would like to identify what is the magnitude of the phenomenon of migration of the Romanian doctors, the patterns of migration of the doctors, the opinions of the decision factors in the medical field and what is the conceptual model of the migrating doctor?

The information obtained will represent a basis for the foundation of the public policies that will be developed by the Romanian authorities in the domain of the migration of the Romanian physicians.

Methodology

The study of the aspects associated with the migration of the physicians requires from the methodological point of view a complex approach and various research instruments which must clarify the analysis framework, the social and economic characteristics of the phenomenon, legislative aspects and the evaluation of the ethical and cultural issues involved. These endeavors imply the usage of quantitative and qualitative methods. Taking into the consideration the significant events of the social and politic life in Romania after 2007 and the dynamics of the phenomenon of the migration of the physicians we prefer an approach at the level

of an empirical analysis. The issue of the migration of the Romanian doctors remains opened to other methodological options proposed for the future research in the project to which the current study is included. Consequently, in this research the theoretical and scientific support was based on methods of qualitative analysis *focused on individual experiences* (phenomenological approach, textual analysis, reconstruction and evaluation of the argumentation as well as others related to critical analysis, deduction, induction and analogy of the information taken from the mass-media) (Berger, 2011). Through the semantic reconstruction we aimed to value what is important for the migrating physician and what is the knowledge area of the whole phenomenon of migration of the doctors from Romania.

The study is based on the information obtained from various sources and it covers the period of time after 2007. The documentation focused on information referring to the tendencies of the phenomenon in Romania and the identification of the migration pattern by using the method of desktop research and implied a large process of collecting information and statistical data from the media (on-line press, TV coverage, interviews in the media, analyses of the reports of public institutions cited in press, the consultation of studies and quantitative and qualitative research on this issue – study of the CMR “Measurement of the professional satisfaction of the doctors active in the healthcare system” which took place in 2009, “The situation of the work force in the Romanian healthcare system. Point of view of the managers in the system” Rotila V, Celmare L, University „Low Danube” Galați, in collaboration with the Healthcare Office and the National Syndical Central “SAN.ASIST” which took place in 2009 and the analysis of Money.ro on the source of information from the National Statistical Institute, the Healthcare Office and the College of Physicians from Romania which took place in 2010, informal data of the representatives of non-governmental organizations or of public institutions. An important element, in our opinion, sometimes ignored or less valued is represented by the information supplied by certain comments on articles from the on-line press, which come from the medical staff that is living the experience of migration. We deemed important to use this pool of information especially due to the sincerity of the opinion of the person which posts a comment.

From the media (the archives of the on-line newspapers issued after 2007) we selected the statistical data dedicated to the phenomenon of migration of the Romanian doctors which we classified according to the source of information used in official and unofficial statistics: (1) Statistical data on the migration of the Romanian doctors presented in the media, sources cited CMR, NIS, MH, WMO; (2) Statistical data on the migration of the physicians presented in the media (the newspaper on-line archive ziare.com) without an official source cited.

Results and discussions

Regarding the first objective of the study we used the description of the phenomenon in its chronologic evolution starting from 2007 and for a better understanding of the migration we kept in the analysis both the category of the statistical data referring to the doctors who left the country and the data referring to the possible migrants (those who applied for conformity certificates). We grouped the statistical data into categories and we offered explanations referring to the possible generating causes. We associated the statistical data with the opinions expressed by the doctors and the decision factors in the healthcare system. At the same time, where it was possible or where we had more data we chose to combine this method with the photography of the situation at a certain time.

What is the magnitude of the phenomenon of migration of the Romanian physicians?

The dynamics of the mobility in the EU after 2007 reveals an ascending technique of the number of physicians that migrated but also of those that intend to leave the country in order to work abroad. According to the social theories on the circular migration of the individuals with high qualifications, the magnitude is dominated by the economic factors (Vertovec, 2007). The extraction of the statistical data from the media information and the interpretation from the medical point of view offers a wider perspective for the interpretation of the phenomenon beyond its strictly statistical dimension. In order to understand what goes on behind the data and to find their sense and signification (Wolcott, 1994) we need a qualitative approach which can present the magnitude of the phenomenon of migration of the physicians such as it appears in the reports and the data of the institutions in this field.

The fact that “4,000 doctors left the country in the last 2 years and almost 5,000 others are also ready to leave it” (Ziare.com, 2010) expands the interpretation framework of the magnitude of the migration through the attachment of significations and thus transforms the statistical discourse of the dimensions of the phenomenon into one which delineates the mechanisms for the identification of the consequences.

“The exodus of the doctors will determine in maximum 10 years the collapse of the healthcare system” (Ziarul de Iasi, 2008) because “after the integration of Romania in the EU many Romanian doctors took seriously into account the option of the emigration. If every year 2000 doctors leave Romania and the students also think about working abroad, do we risk remaining without doctors?” (Muresan, 2010).

We must notice the legislative impact on the degree of encompassing and diversification of the phenomenon, inferred from the quality of EU member and the right to free circulation. The year 2007 represents a turning point with respect to the management of the migration in Romania due to the acquirement of the status of member of the European Union. So, through the implementation of the Directive of the EC 2005/36 referring to the recognition of the professional qualifications, our country confronted with a raised number of requests from the Romanian physicians looking to go and work abroad (3500 request in 2007, source Healthcare Office cited by Dragomiristeanu, 2010; 2001 certificates of conformity released, source: College of Physicians, Bucharest, 2010). From the perspective point of view, the option of exerting this profession abroad is taken into consideration before graduating the faculty, hence the estimates on the real dimension of the phenomenon need elaborations on the status of migrant (possible/probable) as well as the confirmation of the option for a certain type of migration (permanent, circular, temporary etc.) (Iredale, 2002; Jinks, 2000), due to the fact that a segment of those who leave will certainly return. In the dynamics of the contemporary globalization the migration of the physicians is a notion which is redefined on new social, cultural and juridical coordinates (Anghel, 2009).

Consequently the versions taken from the media discourse "*Romania without doctors*" (Ziare.com, 2011) or "*If we all leave what will become of Romania?*" (Ziarul de Iasi, 2012) reveal an approach focused on "sensational" information, because the media can only partially explain the phenomenon, forcing the affirmations through spectacular titles of articles that lack opinions and documentation. For the establishment of the reality of the migration further investigations and reinterpretations is necessary. This is a lesser-known area which needs exploration and advanced questions in order to obtain answers that can generate political strategies for the efficient management of the phenomenon.

In the media the migration of the Romanian physicians is presented as a dynamic phenomenon with an ascending trend determined by the power of the forces that generate it. After 2007, the dynamics of the mobility of the physicians in EU reveals and ascending tendency (WMR, 2011). The physicians continue to migrate and the number of those intending to leave the country in order to work abroad is higher every year. A statistical argument is the big number of conformity certificates requested by physicians in this interval. Another reason of this magnitude, which reveals the dynamic and cumulative character of the migration, is represented by the financial motivations integrated with aspects referring to the training level and professional recognition (Kahanec et al., 2008).

Confronted with "*big salaries for the Romanian doctors! More and more offers abroad!*", "*each month, over 260 Romanian doctors choose to work abroad*" (Presaonline.com, 2011) to which we can add a perspective of migration for "*10,000 doctors and pharmacists which are about to leave soon*" (Realitatea.net, 2010), the confirmation of the professional training in accordance with the highest

European standards transformed the Romanian physicians into “*stars on the work market in Europe*” (Protv, 2010) where they “*lead in the top of the most desired specialists abroad*” (Ivan, 2009). A concrete level of recognition is also the fact that “*the West made available (for 2010) twice as many jobs for specialists and residents*” (Protv, 2010), the “*foreign clinics are looking for 3,000 Romanian doctors*” (Ziare.com) and in France “*the managers of the hospitals are still looking for anesthesiologists, psychiatrists, orthopedists, dentists and pharmacists*” (Protv, 2010) although “*already 12% from the physicians in France are Romanians*” (Agerpres, 2010).

Significant for the migration of the physicians are the migration policies with effects and influences on the tendencies and the characteristics of the phenomenon. In the case of Romania, at the confluence between the policies of medical education, national healthcare versus EU that outlines the regulations of the migration regime for the physicians the incongruencies and the inefficiencies are highlighted. To this end, we can talk, on one side about disfunctions in the institutional system that can or not be in direct connection with the problematic issues resulted from the inefficient coherence and the heterogenous vision at the national level regarding the management of the migration phenomenon and on the other hand we can talk about problematic aspects regarding the legislative framework, the application norms of the laws and their manner of implementation. From the examples identified in our research study: (1) At the national level two thirds of the doctors are dispersed in 6 cities (university centers) and even in these locations some specialties do not have a sufficient representation. The paradox is the fact that we have unemployment in the medical domain because of the relative excess in some specialties, which contrasts abruptly with the deficit of doctors caused by the insufficient number of financed jobs. The latter is very alarming if we take a look at the average of the emigrants, which is about 6-7%. According to the WHO regulations, it is considered that “*if the migration of the physicians in one country exceeds 2% of the total of medical staff, the state must declare a red code and take measures.*” (Muresan, 2010); (2) In a WHO monitoring report of the countries regarding the number of physicians per 1000 inhabitants, Romania is classified on the 46th place out of 48, with 1.9 doctors/1000 inhabitants, four times less than the countries with advanced healthcare systems [France (7.9) or Germany (7.8)] and less even than neighboring countries with similar healthcare systems, which place themselves close to the European average of 3.5 doctors [Bulgaria (2.7), Moldavian Republic (2.9), Ukraine (3.1) and Hungary (3.9)] (Vladescu, 2010).

Why do physicians leave? Migration patterns of the physicians

The physicians want social recognition, professional achievement and respect from the society. These aspects are desired by all the 50,386 doctors in Romania, from which 7,500 are residents (Ziare.com 2010). In the sociologic studies

performed by the Romanian College of Physicians we can observe that the causing factors are the *“failure to achieve a professional career, the frequent legislative changes and the social position of the doctor”* (CMR, 2009). These factors are mirrored by the point of view of the doctors expressed through their individual opinions and “life stories”, the categories of reasons being also the career, the financial situation and the social status.

“I decided to leave because the salaries in our country do not permit even our survival” (Lavinia, resident on anesthesiology: Protv, 2011).

“Why do physicians leave?” TT, a doctor who exerts this profession in London, England believes that *“medicine is a profession which still attracts capable and very ambitious young people”* and the predominantly professional motivation exists, stressing the fact that *“along with the professional achievement we all want a quality life”* (roMedicsLife UK, 2008).

From the media reports, the priority and the relationship between the motivational dominants of economical and/or professional nature seem to be definitive in the outline of the migrant typology, classified frequently according to the temporal criterion (temporary or permanent migration), proximity of destination country and communication facilities (Iredale, 2002). According to the theories of migration (Jennissen, 2007, Madison, 2006) the mobility of the physicians must be understood within its context, as an accepted or preferred alternative, which emphasizes the individual factors in the fulfillment of the financial needs and of the professional trajectory, due to the differences in income associated with the internal unsatisfactory work conditions. We give below the opinion of a resident: *“Doctors are also people who depend on the financial part of life. Are really their salaries so small, I can't believe it...after all these years of study? Is this the recognition and the respect for the valuable people?”* (Ziare.com, 2007).

But the acceptance of the migration does not entail only approaches in terms of economical fundaments; it can function also as a complementary and neoformative pattern by which the physician is helped to reduce the distance between the professional and social expectations possible in Romania and those that can be achieved abroad. The duration and the intensity of the exposure to the new context are two coordinates that widen the competitive value, for they provide a significant framework for the learning of the values, attitudes and norms specific for the professional integration and the social adaptation (Fitchett, 2011).

A detailed formulation of the type of migrating physician can be identified in the contractual migration intermediated by recruitment companies through job fairs (Garbayo, 2009; Forcier, 2004). In the reports on the migration of the physicians the media describes the motivations centered on professional determinants and underlines the efforts, the supplementary work and the hardships accepted in order to maximize the benefits for the professional direction but also

the compromise of accepting the conditions in another context with another scale of values, which can determine inequities and responsibility.

“...as soon as they saw the opportunity to work abroad, hundreds and then thousands of physicians emigrated to the West... in Romania they must endure small pays, the lack of medicines and equipment and sometimes they are forced to deprive themselves of their personal time in order to dedicate entirely to their profession”. (Muresan, 2010)

If we try a parallel with the healthcare system in the destination country we can see how the recruitment companies “force” through attraction the decision to migrate of those who are part of a professional domain characterized by availability to mobility (Bundred, 2000; Kottow, 2003).

A. (dentist) “is glad to hear that a dentist who works there for 10-12 hours can have at the end of the year a small fortune accumulated. He may not know everything that the dentists there know (France) because he is not accustomed with such evolved equipment, but he is willing to learn”. (Protv, 2010)

The degree of freedom in taking the decision to migrate is a criterion for the typological classification of the migrant doctor, which relies on reasons for the maximization of the professional, financial and personal benefits (Smith, 2008). In ethical terms, the migration pattern offers the potential for a better understanding and exploration of the motivations of the doctors from the point of view of the autonomy, dignity and responsibility principles (Christman, 2009; Thomson, 2010). In the media we can observe how the autonomy correlates with the freedom to take certain decisions which aim at the achievement of the intention to exert the profession abroad. In the media, the construction of the autonomy of the migrant maintains rather the legislative direction reflected in the freedom of circulation, the recognition of the professional qualification – the conformity certificate – than the descriptive signification with relevance for the idea of dignity and the values for the moral beliefs of the physicians (CE/2005/36). From the point of view of the social construction, the autonomy grows according to the principles of justice and social responsibilities, through the sum of freedoms with alternative values of guaranteed and legally respected benefits, aspects which, in the media discourse, place a “tension” between autonomy, dignity and responsibility in the social, professional and healthcare systems comparisons between the native and the destination country (Yanay, 1994). But in the phenomenon of migration of the physicians not always the nature, the form and the intensity of the motivations which determine an individual to migrate can be clearly identified. The person who states that wants to migrate temporarily can declare an apparent cause, the real one being the search for a better life standard and for a better job, or a cause of a familial, personal, extraprofessional or health nature etc.

For some of the doctors, going abroad means not only bigger salaries but also avoiding the social stigmatization for the job accepted in his country. This is why

the doctors are interested to identify and integrate in those locations that offer considerably larger compensations for an effort similar to the one in his native country. Confronted with the attraction represented by the countries where the physician profession occupies an important national position, FR, a doctor participating at the job fair, believes that abroad *“the doctors are not submitted, they are not as slaves as they are in Romania”* (Protv, 2010). The doctors in Romania want to develop a professional career, to be able to estimate their evolution within the context of a foreseeable and predictable legal framework, with dignity and without an unjustifiable dependence on the decision factors for their professional achievement. At the same time, they take into consideration the difficulties which can be encountered in the destination country, presented as *“The dilemma of the Romanian doctors”* – faced with the issue regarding the question: *“to stay in the country or to leave for the West for bigger salaries and better work conditions?”* (Ziare.com, 2010). The failure to adapt in a foreign country is a part of the risks to which the doctors working abroad are exposed. Working harder, the difficulties to be promoted in a different cultural environment and even the acceptance of a position inferior to the training, all these are situations assumed together with the decision to migrate.

“I have friends who are doctors and who left for Sweden and they told me that the adaptation was very difficult. Breaking your roots is always difficult and you always seem to miss something” is the opinion of a doctor who *“turned down a 10 times bigger salary in order to remain a doctor in Iași”* (Ziarul de Iasi, author Costin, 2012).

What are the opinions of the decision factors?

The migration of the doctors from Romania as a phenomenon is certainly a preoccupation and a source of concern at the level of the decision factors, being regarded as *“a matter of national interest”* (Turea, 2011). The expansion of the phenomenon of the migration of the physicians implies the necessity of a careful observation of the phenomenon by the media and for the healthcare decision factors together with the active participation to the management of this mobility in the context of the contemporary requirements and mostly of the decrease of the less desired consequences through the magnitude levels signaled by the official sources.

The most prominent in the field of the decision factors is the voice of the professional college (The Romanian College of Physicians – RCP) which develops a polyphonic discourse communicating and supporting the point of view of the physicians expressed through *“the desire to develop the professional career and to achieve performance without neglecting the temptation for the incomes bigger than the ones in Romania”*. Also, in this discourse it is underlined the position of the doctor in society: *“the Romanian physician is forced to improvise in order to*

obtain performance and when he does not obtain results he is quickly blamed. On top of this it is added an attitude of the authorities which “lets to be desired” towards an elite professional environment, many doctors being humiliated by institutions such as the Health Insurance House” (Muresan, 2010 sursa ziare bisness magazin). In the opinion of the Health Ministers, the migration is evaluated as “...a European phenomenon which is manifested as a consequence of our entrance in the European Community” (Turea, 2011). Generally, the respondents believe that the migration of the physicians is a natural phenomenon, an effect of globalization and do not take into account retention policies: “The work market is free; this does not mean that we are the greatest exporters” (idem). Asked about the migration of the physicians, the Education Minister stated that “Romania will grow including through the quality Romanians, through those well trained, honest and hardworking who function abroad” (Romedic, 2011).

The reports of WHO (2006) and OCDE (2007) revealed as main reasons for the international migration of the physicians: the increase of the income, access to new medical technologies, the possibility to offer a better future for the children and family (Dumont, 2007). In the migration of the physicians, also known as “*brain drain – the exodus of the brains*” (Massey, 2003), along with the losses for the originating country a positive potential can be identified, ensured through the good reputation attributed abroad to the well trained individuals as well as through the supplementary value by the addition of capital and by the experience acquired.

The hospital managers believe that the “*lack of personnel is due to the high level of migration and the level of training of the staff has decreased*”. The big differences between the level of the income in Romania and in the destination countries were identified as the main reason for the migration in the healthcare system and by the managers in the healthcare system in Romania.

The suggestions for solving these problems belong to the financial domain: “*bigger salaries so that the medical staff wouldn't leave to work in other countries and the creation of a legislative framework in the medical domain*” (CMR, 2009). This denotes the fact that the current Romanian healthcare system through the public healthcare system it promotes and through the current legislation cannot support and cannot create the framework favorable for the development of a professional qualitative career, salaries adequate to the work, enough jobs for all the graduates, better work conditions and career opportunities. Although recent, the Strategic Plan of the Healthcare Office in the years 2008-2010 set as objective the development of the human resource according to the needs of the population. The fact that the number of the Romanian physicians that migrate is continuously rising can lead us to the conclusion that the measures taken by the decision factors are not in concordance with the needs of the doctors and it is necessary to establish new directions in the field of the healthcare policies that can be efficiently implemented at the national level.

What is the conceptual model of migrating doctor reflected in the media?

In this study we focused on *to what extent the media discourse is able to provide data on the phenomenon of the migration of the physicians from Romania, which could allow for the elaboration of a conceptual model explainable as a unitary signification in the practical and theoretical space and, moreover, whose evolution can be anticipated?* The conceptual model of the migrating doctor is an approach from constructivist but also contextualized perspectives derived from the diversity of the phenomenon at the social and human level, through which it is aimed the identification of the values associated with the migration and the relationship between their imposition and the increase of the migration at the level of the community (Scheufele, 1999). To these assertions, we associate the mention referring to the contexts of theoretical and practical analysis on the migration, the presentation of typologies and analysis frameworks on the migration, the media exerts but also assumes its role to inform and familiarize the public opinion with the migration of the physicians from Romania. In the presentation of the aspects of the migration it is important to emphasize the qualification level of the media, because the content of the messages represents a source which generates both opinions and currents of opinion, as well as involvements in qualified research on the area of the opinable, starting from the semantic dimension of the opinions circulated (WMR, 2011). This underlining is necessary because we live in an informational society where the individuals spend a lot of time informing themselves, and their opinions are greatly influenced by what they see, hear or read (Bandura, 2011). The elaboration framework of a conceptual model for the migrating physician from Romania considers a rational and ideological approach, which entails the transgression from the statistical measurement of the phenomenon to the quantification of its impact in the social, economic, political and ethical domain.

But the question to be asked is *to what extent the media, by the quantitative and qualitative integration of the presented aspects will give a shape to the experiences, perceptions and self-representations of this professional group in continuous movement and extremely dispersed geographically?* In the current study, the information in the media on the migration of the physicians, reclassify the realities starting from the experimental knowledge in accordance with certain practices, norms and theoretical guiding lines. However, through the absorption of prejudices, values and convictions it achieves in fact a list of issues instead of analyses and thematic approaches. The statistical data associated with the investigation methods specific for the sociology of the migration offers information on the dimension and the evolution of the migration of the physicians, without specifications on the changes in the attitude and behavior of the actors within space and time. Through the exploration of the cumulative causality of the phenomenon of the migration of the physicians from Romania, the media discourse constructs typologies which show the way that the Romanian physician sees and

perceives the migration more as a resultant of the economic and career imperatives and less in its cultural, social and ethical dimensions. The information in the media is not able to provide a comprehensive and representative portrait of the entire migrating population, of the reasons for which the doctors decide to leave the country, of the motivations for the choice of one country or another as well as of the means used and of the difficulties encountered in the destination country (WMR, 2011). Also, in the media discourse we can notice a significant difference between the modality to express migration by the physician as opposed to the decision factors.

The limits of the study

As an empirical analysis, one of the obstacles was represented by the recognition of the limits of the information sources regarding the issue approached. Due to the existence of a significant category of materials that do not quote official sources, we can consider that these are impregnated with a certain dosage of subjectivity and a filter through which these pieces of information are passed. We can bring into discussion also the fact that at the national level there is not an unitary instrument to measure the dimension of the phenomenon, reason for which our endeavor focuses on the human dimension of this complex phenomenon. The study can be accepted as representing a starting point for the analysis of the relationship between the points of view expressed by the doctors on one hand and the healthcare decision factors on the other hand.

Conclusions

The study regarding the opinions on the migration of the Romanian physicians presented in the media aims to reveal certain important points in the evolution of the phenomenon in the period after 2007 starting from the information available in the media. The information in the media regarding the opinions of doctors and decision factors on the mobility of the physicians in Romania support the results of the study and potentiate many of these, firstly the ones related to the magnitude and the tendencies of the phenomenon, the motivations to migrate founded on reasons of economical and professional nature but also on the value system and social recognition. The analysis of the information acquired in the present research leads to the following conclusions structured according to the objectives followed. The current media practice certainly proves the increased interest for the issue of the migration of the Romanian doctors with respect to the *magnitude*, *tendencies* and *dimensions* of the phenomenon. Although the statistical data through the numbers can reveal certain aspects, some pieces of qualitative information are

necessary in order to outline the magnitude the phenomenon of migration of the physicians such as it appears in the reports and the data of the institutions of the healthcare system. The extraction of the statistical data from the media information and their placement in a combined analysis with the signification of the numbers offers a wider perspective for the interpretation of the phenomenon, beyond its strictly statistical dimension. The research also shows which are the deficient areas or the territories where for various reasons; difficulties are encountered, either because there is no information, or because there is not sufficient data.

Regarding the establishment of migration patterns for the physicians, the media underlines the importance of the economic and/or professional reasons in the identification of the migrant typology. The exploration of the reasons which support the decision to migrate reveal also other patterns by which a specific note is brought to the migrations with high qualification, where physicians are also comprised. In the presentation of the migrant typologies we observe a tendency to expand the approach towards variants of patterns founded on reasons related to personal needs, cultural integration, and professional achievement. However, the information in the media does not manage to offer an exhaustive and representative portrait of the entire migrating population, of the reasons to choose a country or another and also of the means used and the difficulties encountered in the destination country.

Regarding the opinions of the decision factors on the migration of the Romanian physicians it is obvious in the media discourse a diminished visibility of the interventions of the decision factors as opposed to the opinions of the doctors on this phenomenon. Another conclusion can be drawn on the differences of perception of the migration phenomenon by the doctors and the decision factors, classified on one hand in the approach from the healthcare system with practical representation starting from causes and reasons, and on the other hand an institutional approach with normative representation at the national and European level. The presence of differences between the official discourse and the amplification of the migration phenomenon determines the positions of criticism of the media towards the measures taken.

The media plays an important role in the information of the public opinion and as such it is important that it provides an image as balanced as possible of the migration of the physicians from Romania through the correct usage of the data base in order to allow the drawing of conclusions on the direction, intensity, consistency and center of this issue within the context of the social, economic, juridical and ethical context.

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Abbreviations

DG SANCO - Direcția Generală Sisteme de Asistență Medicală

WMR: World migration raport

CMR: College doctors from Romania

NIS: National Institute of Statistics

MH: Ministry of Health

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www.iom.int World Migration Report 2011

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www.ms.ro Planul Strategic al Ministerului Sănătății Publice pe anii 2008-2010

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