

Ethical dimension of the pharmaceutical market in Poland

The pharmaceutical market is a dynamic and complex realm. It combines extensive and interacting departments that form a process leading from clinical and non-clinical trials of candidates for medicinal products, through the process of drug registration and possible introduction to the reimbursement list, promotion of the drug among healthcare professionals and patients as well as wholesale and retail distribution. The diversity and complexity of the processes taking place here finds a common point in the person of a human being acting in these institutionalized and procedurally bound structures. This dissertation is an attempt to show that - as an area of human activity - the pharmaceutical market can and should be subject to ethical evaluations based on integral anthropology, which is fully expressed in Christian personalism. This dissertation is therefore an attempt to assess the pharmaceutical market in Poland on the basis of the ethics, that concentrates around the concept of a person and their inherent dignity. The issue has been described in five chapters.

The first one presents anthropological theories in the context of their influence on formation of ethical principles within the pharmaceutical market and attempts to demonstrate their imperfections and shortcomings. Due to the multitude of competing theories and anthropological trends, certain criteria necessary for a proper and comprehensive assessment of the pharmaceutical market are indicated.

The second chapter presents such anthropological, ethical, social and legal criteria that enable an in-depth assessment of activities on the pharmaceutical market, without losing sight of the holistic vision of a person. The common good, justice, solidarity and subsidiarity are emphasized here, because they create the social criteria and responsibility (ethical, social, legal, etc.), as a special and universal form that allows the formation of right consciences of people involved in the pharmaceutical market and their mutual relationship. However, since the understanding of who a person is has consequences for both ethics and moral theology, the anthropological criteria have also been interpreted in the light of God's Revelation. In the following chapters, the listed criteria were related to the specific pharmaceutical market, with its economic, medical, legal, etc. components.

The third chapter therefore concerns the ethical responsibility of people committed to clinical trials of new medicines and government officials involved in medical registration and then reimbursement. From a moral perspective arise the questions about, for example, the fair distribution of available resources, the safety of drugs launched in the market, and the establishing of the rules for subsidizing drugs so that they become available to patients.

The fourth chapter discusses ethical problems related to promotion and advertising of drugs. The result of irresponsibly conducted marketing activities, addressed both to persons authorized to prescribe drugs and to patients, is an increase in the amount of drugs sold, which may have a number of negative consequences. In this area, ethical problems are mainly related to the illegal distribution of drugs, as well as the relationship between the patient and the pharmacist. A separate problem is the issue of ensuring that pharmacists can act according to their own conscience.

The fifth chapter is a kind of buckle that binds the dissertation. Referring to its first chapter, it presents that personalistic justifications are necessary in pharmaceutical ethics. Hence the man and his personal dignity must be a reference point for their ethical analysis of the pharmaceutical market at all stages and in all dimensions of its functioning, also in the economic dimension. Christian personalism seems to be the most appropriate proposal here.