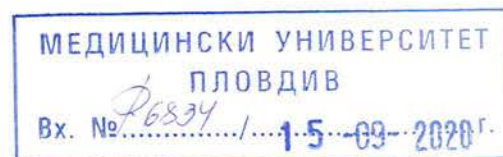


Statement for the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

STATEMENT

by Prof. Juliana Krumova Marinova, MD, PhD

Faculty of Medicine, Trakia University - Stara Zagora



On a thesis for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

professional field 7.1. Medicine

doctoral program "Social Medicine And Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy"

Author: Vesela Georgieva Burkert

Form of doctoral program: *independent preparation*

Department: "Social Medicine and Public Health" – Faculty of Public Health, Medical University - Plovdiv

Topic: "Study of the Importance of Communication Skills in the Dental Practice."

Doctoral thesis supervisors: Prof. Dr. Maria Stoykova, MD

Prof. Dr. Maria Semerdzhieva, MD

1. General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral student:

The presented set of materials on paper and electronic media is in accordance with Article 115 (1) of the Procedure for Acquisition of educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Medical University - Plovdiv; Regulations of Medical University-Plovdiv and includes all required documents included in the model of the statement. The documentation on the procedure is complete, accurate and well sorted.

The thesis presented for evaluation is written in 240 pages, illustrated with 24 tables and 46 figures. Contains 6 applications. The bibliography includes 267 literature sources, of which 22 (8.2%) in Cyrillic and 245 (91.8%) in Latin.

In connection with the thesis Vesela Georgieva Burkert has attached: - **5 publications:** 4 full-text publications, one of which is in print (Folia Medica); 2 articles are in English in foreign scientific periodicals (Stoma Edu J; Sch J Psychol & Behav Sci); one article is in Bulgarian in a

Bulgarian scientific periodical (Health Policy and Management); one published summary in English (Folia Medica); as well as an e-poster participation in a scientific forum.

Presentation of the doctoral student:

Vesela Georgieva Burkert was born in 1982. She graduated from an English Language High School with full honors. She graduated with a master's degree in dentistry from the University of Cologne, Germany in 2009. Since 2010 she has been a dentist in dental practices: successively: Zahnmedizin Siegburg, Siegburg (2010 - 2016); Stephanie Cabot, Bonn (2017 - 2019); Dr. Jens Bormann, Bonn (2019 - 2020); Stephanie Cabot, Bonn (2020 and present). In the system of postgraduate education she has acquired the specialty "Periodontology" in 2012. She is certified in 3D diagnostics of the oral cavity since 2018.

Vesela Burkert speaks the following foreign languages: German (level C2), English (level C1), Russian (level A1).

2. Relevance of the topic

The problem developed in the thesis is relevant in scientific and scientific-applied terms. This topic is argued by the doctoral student with skill and deep understanding.

3. Knowledge of the problem

The literature review covers 54 pages of the dissertation and is presented in 9 main parts, focusing on: definition for communication; types of communication; factors that affect communication; behavioral models; ways and means for teaching communication skills, sources of information; importance of communication for the dental practice; opinion of dentists and students about the importance of communication in the dental practice; patient opinion about the importance of communication in the dental practice; models for having a conversation in the dental practice. The review ends with a summary of four conclusions. The used literature sources (267, of which 22 in Cyrillic and 245 in Latin) are sufficient in number, there are scientific publications of Bulgarian and mostly foreign researchers and important national and international documents, cited in good faith. The review is written in clear and accessible language and reflects an in-depth knowledge of the issues discussed and a skillful handling of the scientific terminology. The way of presenting the literature review shows the in-depth knowledge of the discussed problems and the author's ability to analytically present rich

scientific information and to argue the exceptional relevance and significance of the dissertation topic, as well as the approach of scientific research.

4. Research methodology: Purpose, tasks, materials and methods: are presented in the dissertation on 7 pages (Chapter II and Chapter III: pages 62 to 68).

The goal is defined precisely and clearly: "to study the importance of communication for the good dental practice". **The tasks** are formulated in 5 points, corresponding to the research goal and contributing to its achievement. The methodology of the study is presented consistently with a clear, correct and accurate definition of: object of observation, technical and logical units of observation, signs of observation - factorial and resulting; place, time and items of the study. **The research methods** used are presented by Vesela Burkert in detail and accurately. The primary sociological information was collected through a direct individual self-administered questionnaire. **Four questionnaires** attached to the dissertation were used (Appendices 1-4). The same are described in good faith by the doctoral student: **1.** a questionnaire for examining the opinion of dentists, containing 26 questions in 4 panels; **2.** a questionnaire for research of the opinion of students in dental medicine, containing 18 questions in 5 panels; **3.** Communication Skills Attitude Scale (CSAS) - a standardized two-part questionnaire with each 13 statements, respectively positively and negatively charged (Bulgarian translation of the German questionnaire, adapted for dental students); **4.** a questionnaire for assessing the opinion of patients, containing 13 questions in three panels. The first two questionnaires for dentists and students are adapted versions of questionnaires from a similar study conducted in Germany and were used in the study with the permission of Prof. Dr. Jörn von Wietersheim (attached to the dissertation: Appendix № 5). This makes it possible, in the course of discussing the results, to make a comparison between one's own results and those of the German study. The chosen research methodology allows to achieve the set goal by obtaining an adequate answer to the tasks in the thesis. The **statistical methods** used are adequate and described in detail.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and contributions

The results and their discussion are presented sequentially, respectively in "Chapter IV and Chapter V of the dissertation, presented on 117 pages, representing half of the total volume of the dissertation (48%) .The results are presented in six sections: 1. Study of the opinion of the

dentists for communication in the dental practice in 7 subsections. 2. Survey of the opinion of dental students in in 9 subsections. 3. Assessment of the opinion of dental students for studying communication skills with Communication Skills Attitude Scale (CSAS). 4. Comparison of the opinion of dentists and dental students in 4 subsections. 5. Survey of patients' opinion about communication in the dental practice in 4 subsections. 6. Comparison of the opinion of dentists and patients. They are precisely arranged, illustrated and correspond to the tasks in the thesis.

Each of the sections is extremely well structured, the results are presented in depth, discussed and summarized. The presentation of the results and their discussion reflect the ability of Vesela Burkert to handle the data from the research, to apply the appropriate methods of analysis and to interpret in depth. This part of the dissertation deserves special attention and high evaluation with its adequate structuring, logical connection and consistency.

The conclusions are reduced to 10, skillfully formulated and directly related to the research goal and objectives.

The contributions from the thesis are presented in a methodological, theoretical and applied manner: an in-depth study of the attitudes for communication in dental practice among dental students in Bulgaria; the connections between factors of communication and the efficiency of the communicative process are established; recommendations are presented for changes in the curriculum "Dental Medicine" in order to deepen, expand and set a practical orientation of the training in communication skills; an original model for conducting a conversation in the dental practice has been created, as well as a manual with the basic concepts in communication and the individual steps of the conversation in support of building long-term relationship and trust in the doctor-patient relationship in dental practice. The recommendations are defined in 4 areas related to the university training in communication skills for dental students; the application of more interactive methods in this field; inclusion of such training in the system of further education.

6. Evaluation of the publications and personal contribution of the doctoral student

In connection with the thesis Vesela Georgieva Burkert has attached: - **5 publications**: 4 full-text publications, one of which is in print (*Folia Medica*); 2 articles are in English in foreign scientific periodicals (*Stoma Edu J; Sch J Psychol & Behav Sci*); one article is in Bulgarian in a Bulgarian scientific periodical (*Health Policy and Management*); one published summary in English (*Folia Medica*); as well as an e-poster participation in a scientific forum and contain the

results of the dissertation. Vesela Burkert is the lead author of all publications, which confirms her personal contribution.

7. Abstract

The abstract is made according to the requirements. It is written in 50 pages and reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation.

CONCLUSION

The thesis *contains scientific-theoretical, methodological and applied results, which represents an original contribution to science and meets all the requirements* of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Rules for application of ZRASRB and the Rules of Medical University - Plovdiv. The presented materials and dissertation results **fully comply with** the specific requirements adopted in connection with the Regulations of Medical University - Plovdiv for application of ZRASRB.

The thesis shows that the doctoral student Vesela Georgieva Burkert has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific field Social Medicine and Organization of Health and Pharmacy, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my *positive assessment* of the research presented by the above peer-reviewed dissertation, abstract, results and contributions, and *I invite the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree 'Doctor'* to Vesela Georgieva Burkert in a doctoral program in **Social Medicine and Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy**.

10.09.2020

Prepared the statement:

Prof. Juliana Kr. Marinova, MD, PhD

