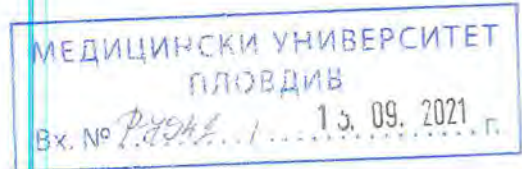


REVIEW



In connection with a dissertation for the award of the scientific degree "DOCTOR OF SCIENCES" on the topic: "THE WAY FROM PROFESSIONAL BURNING TO PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION IN GENERAL MEDICAL PRACTICE. GENERAL MEDICINE AS A PROFESSIONAL CHOICE "

Author of the dissertation:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radost Spiridonova Assenova, MD, Department of Urology and General Medicine, Medical University - Plovdiv

Member of the Scientific Jury who prepared the review:

Prof. Dr. Arman Shnork Postadjian, MD, Department of General Medicine, Medical University, Sofia

The review was prepared in accordance with the Academic Staff Development Act (ACAS), the Regulations for the Application of the Academic Staff (PRAS) and the Regulations on the Terms and Conditions for Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions (PURPNSZAD) in MU-Plovdiv. The scientific jury for the public defense of the dissertation was determined by order of the Rector of the Medical University - Plovdiv № P-1336 / 18.08.2021. The topic of the dissertation was previously discussed and adopted by the Department Council, Department of Urology and General Medicine, Medical University - Plovdiv - prot. 9 / 30.06.2021 and approved by the Faculty Council of MU-Plovdiv with prot 6 / 28.07.2021

The presented set of materials on paper / electronic media is in accordance with the procedure for acquiring the National Assembly "Doctor of Science" in MU - Plovdiv; Regulations of MU-Plovdiv

Dr. Assenova was born in 1973. She completed her secondary education in 1991 at the Mathematical High School, her higher medical education in 1997 at the Higher Medical Institute, Plovdiv. She worked as a district therapist at the First City Polyclinic in Plovdiv (1997-1998), in 1999 after a competition she was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student at the Medical

University of Plovdiv, which after 2002 was transformed into a doctoral program in independent training. Since 2002, Dr. Assenova has been a member of the Department of General Medicine at MU-Plovdiv, successively holding the scientific titles of Assistant (2002-2005), Senior Assistant (2005-2009) and Chief Assistant (from 2009-2012) in Department of Health Management, Health Economics and General Medicine, Medical University of Plovdiv.

In 2009 Dr. Assenova successfully defended her dissertation on "Overweight in children of early school age and preventive activities of general practitioners" and was awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the specialty 03.01.53 "Social Medicine and Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy "- (Diploma №33278 of the Higher Attestation Commission of 08.06.2009) Since 2012 he has been an associate professor at the Department, currently the Department of Urology and General Medicine.

Dr. Assenova has recognized specialties in occupational medicine since 2008 and general medicine since 2004. In 2009 she completed a master's degree in health management at the Faculty of Public Health of MU, Plovdiv. She has additional qualifications in abdominal ultrasound diagnostics, ultrasound diagnostics of the thyroid and mammary glands, computer equipment and technologies, as well as numerous participations in specialized courses directly related to the scientific specialty, which impress training of trainers, communication skills, quality of general medical practice, palliative medicine, coping with depression and anxiety in general practice, educational and medical integration of vulnerable minority groups and others.

Dr. Assenova is the main representative for Bulgaria of the European Research Network in the field of general medicine, perhaps the most prestigious international organization in the field, part of the scientific committee of the organized and held with great success congress of EGPRN in Plovdiv in the period 6 -9 May 2010. Other important memberships are those of the European Organization for the Promotion and Prevention of General Practice and the Association of Family Medicine in South East Europe. She is the founder and chairman of the Association of Trainers and Researchers in Bulgaria in General Medicine (SOIBOM), He speaks written and spoken English.

Structure of the dissertation:

The dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Radost Assenova is written on 220 standard pages, of which:

1. Title page - 1
2. Acronyms - 1
3. Contents - 2
4. Introduction - 1
5. Literature review - 34
6. Purpose, tasks - 2
7. Methodology - 13
8. Own results and discussion - 118
9. Conclusions - 2
10. Recommendations and contributions - 3
11. Literature - 16
12. Applications - total 8

The ratio overview: methodical: result-disassembly part is optimal, respectively 25: 15: 60%. The dissertation contains a total of 56 tables, 9 diagrams and 25 figures and 8 appendices. The dissertation includes 296 sources, of which 64 are in Cyrillic. All the cited titles are directly related to the studied problem.

Characteristic features of work:

The topic of the dissertation is well chosen in terms of significance of the problem and topicality. Twenty years after the start of the health reform in Bulgaria, general medicine is still establishing itself as a clinical specialty and an independent academic and scientific discipline. The scientific literature is dominated by research aimed at assessing stress and cremation syndrome, in particular the influence of certain demographic factors and the work environment.

The assessment of the positive factors in the work of GPs, the psychosocial working conditions, the psychologically difficult contingent for work in general medical practice, such as polymorbid

patients, as well as some personal characteristics of general practitioners (eg locus of control) are not well studied. At present in our country there is no data on the dynamics of burnout syndrome and the level of satisfaction of GPs in the course of establishing the specialty.

There is a lack of information on the relationship between the psychological construct locus of control among general practitioners, the degree of patient-centeredness and the levels of burnout and job satisfaction.

The literature review is 34 pages long and presents the author as a leading expert on this issue.

The development of general medicine and contemporary challenges in general medical practice, the psychological construct of "locus of control", personality-centered care in general medical practice, shared decision-making for assessment of personality-centered care, polymorbidity in and Burnout syndrome among general practitioners, positive aspects related to the work in general medical practice and professional satisfaction of general practitioners

The factual preconditions for the study are derived from the review in the form of a conclusion. As basic prerequisites are formed

- It is necessary to actively and purposefully discuss the philosophy of the specialty of general medicine, which is the basis for its approval and the provision of quality medical care.
- The past period after the reform requires to dynamically consider the characteristics of practitioners and to assess both the degree of burnout and job satisfaction in the health system.
- In-depth knowledge of factors related to personality, philosophy of the specialty and the work environment and the search for relationships between them would contribute to a detailed characterization of the specialty and would be a prerequisite for conscious choice by young doctors.

The aim of the study is formulated precisely and clearly - to examine factors related to sustainability in the profession and vulnerability of general practitioners to the development of burnout syndrome, in order to prepare an interventional model for career guidance.

To achieve it, 6 main tasks are defined in the dissertation thesis:

1. To study positive factors in general medical practice.
2. To characterize the modern GP on the basis of personal aspects of the GP, factors related to the philosophy of the specialty and the work environment
3. To make a complex assessment of the syndrome of occupational cremination among GPs in general medical practice.
4. To analyze the level of satisfaction in relation to the modern characteristics of GPs.
5. To make a comparative assessment of the profile of GPs in 2003. and 2019
6. To prepare an intervention model for professional orientation in order to prevent burnout syndrome.

Strongly impressive is the methodology of the study, which includes a complex methodology of self-developed and standardized tools:

QUANTITATIVE METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Direct anonymous individual survey for 340 GPs for the study of burnout syndrome and level of satisfaction with a panel of the following components - Socio-demographic data, occupational characteristics, lifestyle and lifestyle of GPs, satisfaction, Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), Difficulties in Polymorbid Patient Care, "Shared Decision Questionnaire (9-Item Shared Decision-Making Questionnaire - physician version (SDM-Q-Doc-Bulgarian))",

Questionnaire for localization of control, fully structured, telephone interview among GPs to study positive aspects in general medical practice.

QUALITATIVE METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

- Semi-structured direct interview among GPs to bring out positive aspects in the work
- Focus groups among 5th year medical students
- Delphi consensus procedure and nominal group for validation of the derived positive aspects in the work of GPs and their prioritization.

The obtained results are convincing, well illustrated with tables and figures. They are presented clearly and accurately, and thoroughly compared with results from other sources. Completely appropriate statistical methods have been used to obtain them. In the separate subchapters there is a detailed analysis of the observed dependencies. The conclusion corresponds to the obtained results.

The same applies to the conclusions made. With the help of the obtained data it is established that in our country predominate GPs with internal locus of control, satisfied with the work, with a high degree of patient-centeredness, accepting the limited time for counseling as a leading barrier in the care of polymorbid patients. Occupational cremation syndrome is a significant problem that is widespread among general practitioners. Nearly half of GPs have high levels of emotional exhaustion, just over a third have high levels of depersonalization and low levels of professional performance. Predictors of cremation syndrome are external locus of control of GPs, age over 50 years, lower degree of patient-centeredness, lack of training in personality-centered care, attitudes to change jobs. With the establishment of the specialty of general medicine, the level of emotional exhaustion has decreased, while the level of satisfaction of GPs is statistically significantly higher compared to the introduction of the specialty. The results prove the importance and the need for training at the student level in the discipline of general medicine in the three areas - personal, related to the philosophy of the specialty and the work environment. The training could serve both for professional orientation, prevention of burnout syndrome and for achieving professional satisfaction.

The contributions from the development are in three directions - original character (Assessment of burnout levels among GPs in dynamics; the influence of personal and professional factors, style and lifestyle related to the prevention of cremation syndrome was studied. For the first time, specific relationships have been established between scales for assessing locus of control, patient-centeredness in polymorbid patients; levels of burnout and GP satisfaction in Bulgaria), confirmatory and applied in nature - mainly in the validation of the questionnaire for assessment of shared decision-making SDM-Q-Doc Bulgaria and the internationally accepted definition of polymorbidity in Bulgarian and especially in the establishment of professional Network -

Association of Trainers and Researchers in Bulgaria in General Medicine (SOIBOM), which promotes the specialty and creates international, interdisciplinary links

Practical recommendations were made to the Ministry of Health, medical and patient organizations, and to general practitioners for the recognition and application of the approach and the need for additional training of GPs in Bulgaria in order to improve the quality of health care and increase the satisfaction of doctors and patients.

The results of the dissertation confirm and enrich the knowledge about the factors influencing the PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION IN GENERAL MEDICAL PRACTICE, at the same time paving the way for future development of the staff and challenges.

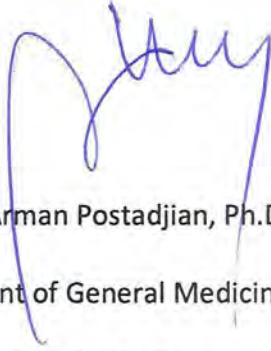
On the topic of the dissertation the candidate has published thirteen papers accepted and printed in journals with impact factor - a total of 5 in number, 7 in indexed and referenced in international databases journals "General Medicine" and "Folia Medica", as well as one chapter in a collective textbook The World Book of Family Medicine - WONCA Europe Edition 2020. In seven of the mentioned publications Assoc. Prof. Assenova is the first or the only author. Two of the articles with an impact factor have been cited 17 times in the Web of Science. Based on these facts, the scientific activity in the period of preparation of the work is assessed as optimal and corresponding to the scientometric indicators of MU-Plovdiv for units with clinical-diagnostic activity.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the dissertation presented by Assoc. Prof. Radost Spiridonova Assenova, MD contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements for awarding the scientific degree "DOCTOR OF SCIENCES". On these grounds, I propose to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to vote positively and propose to the Rector of MU - Plovdiv to award the degree "Doctor" in General Medicine, Assoc. Prof. Radost Spiridonova Assenova, MD, Department of Urology and General Medicine, Medical University - Plovdiv.

September 12, 2021

Sofia



Prof. Dr. Arman Postadjian, Ph.D.

Department of General Medicine,

Medical University, Sofia