

STATEMENT

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ON DISSERTATION

FOR AWARDING A SCIENTIFIC DEGREE *DOCTOR OF SCIENCE*.

Professional field: **7.1 MEDICINE**.

Scientific specialty: **GENERAL PRACTICE**

**Author: Assoc. Prof. Radost Spiridonova Asenova, MD, PhD**

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Topic: *From Burnout to Job Satisfaction in General Practice. General Practice / Family Medicine as a Career Choice.*

**1. General presentation of the dissertation.** The proposed dissertation is structured in an introduction, four chapters, conclusions, recommendations, contributions, applications and literature, which are very well balanced and logically connected and build upon. It consists of 220 pages of main text, literature and 24 pages of appendices. Attached is a list of 296 sources of scientific literature, of which 64 in Cyrillic and 232 in Latin. The main text includes 25 figures, 56 tables and 9 diagrams with structured information.

**2. Relevance of the problem.** The changes in the modern working conditions in the medical profession have set high requirements not only for medical skills, but also knowledge in the fields of health management, pedagogy and social medicine. In the era of digital transformation and the rapid development of information and communication technologies / ICT /, the technical skills that are completely missing in the training of doctors are added to them. Opportunities for narrow specialization also determine the key role of the general practitioner in the health system. He is a coordinator, a leader and he is expected to have a wide range of qualities to meet the requirements of the system and practice in conditions of satisfaction. At the moment in our country there are no large-scale studies on the level of stress, burnout, positive factors and satisfaction with the GP profession, which is part of the author's reason to direct his research within the dissertation topic on the choice of medical students to specialize in general medicine as a profession.

**3. Characteristics of the presented project's content.** The proposed dissertation for awarding a scientific degree "Doctor of Science" has an integrative nature. The author's research is focused on the study of factors related to the sustainability of the profession and the vulnerability of general practitioners to the development of burnout syndrome, in order to develop an interventional model for career guidance. The author intends to achieve this by deriving and validating the positive factors in the profession, to characterize the modern GP on the basis of his personal characteristics - socio-demographic indicators, lifestyle, locus of control and derivation of relationships between them, to make a comprehensive assessment of exhaustion syndrome among GPs for several periods since 2003, to analyze satisfaction, to compare profiles between 2003 - 2019, and as a result of which to prepare a model for intervention.

The concept contains precise and clear statements, which correctly outline the parameters of the research - specific goals, comparable research tasks, subject and object of the research, experimentally verifiable hypothesis and sub-hypotheses. The methodology used in the study is appropriately selected. The research methods are specified. The research tools include:

1. Quantitative methods:

1.1. Direct anonymous individual survey for GPs to study burnout syndrome and level of satisfaction (The reasons for choosing the incorporated tools in the questionnaire are based on a systematic review of the literature, implemented international and intra-university projects and related research on the topic.)

1.2. Fully structured, telephone interview among GPs to study positive aspects in general medical practice (The questionnaire includes a limited number of closed questions in the following areas: demographic characteristics; presence of specialty, attractive aspects of GPs, factors that would make the work more attractive and the GP's desire to change the current job.)

2. Quality methods:

2.1. Semi-structured direct interview among GPs to bring out positive aspects of the work (A list of preliminary questions has been prepared, the order of which could be changed according to the interviewer's perception of what he sees as most appropriate. The method allows changes when necessary, as well as explanations.)

2.2. Focus groups among 5<sup>th</sup> year medical students (The topic, place and time of the meeting are planned. A scenario is prepared in advance, which includes an introduction, presentation of the participants, clarification of the purpose of the discussion and its subject.)

2.3. Delphi consensus procedure and nominal group for validation of the derived positive aspects in the work of GPs and their prioritization (For validation of the derived positive aspects in the work of GPs it is accepted to use electronic platform *Survey Monkey*. The selection of participants is based on the assessment of researchers for the expertise of the participants (Purposive sampling.)

Statistical methods used:

1. Thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke

2. Descriptive statistics.

3. Alternative analysis.

4. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

5.  $\chi^2$  for multiple tables and Fisher's exact test for 2x2 tables.

6. Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal-Wallis Test, at more than two independent quantities.

7. One-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA)

8. Independent samples t-test

9. Correlation analysis. To assess the correlation between the studied quantities, a correlation coefficient of Pearson and Spearman's rho was calculated.

10. Regression analysis.

11. Graphic analysis

Through the applied mathematical-statistical methods the author shows excellent research and analytical skills. Qualitative and quantitative approaches have been applied in summarizing the results of the various activities.

On the basis of theoretical and empirical research, clear interrelations are defined, connecting the positive aspects of the general medicine profession and the exhaustion syndrome. The need to rethink the current approach of orienting medical students to specialization is motivated and an intervention model for prevention of burnout syndrome is been developed.

Based on the original combination of quantitative and qualitative analyzes, the dependencies between vulnerability and resilience in the general medicine profession are

derived. A complex description of the positive aspects of the specialty in Bulgaria has been made.

While similar studies exist, this is the first time a dynamic assessment of the burnout syndrome was made on such a large scale. Specific interrelations have been established and the profiles of the research during a significantly large period - 2003 - 2019 have been compared.

Assoc. Prof. Assenova has followed the path of professional development of general practitioners in Bulgaria ever since the creation of the specialty. At every moment of her career, she has closely monitored the changes faced by those working in primary health care. The transition from district physicians to GPs, the constant changes in the ordinance for specialization, the difficult building the prestige of the specialty, the unclear regulations, the significant emotional stress, empathy and personal commitment to patients are among the many factors through which she came to the idea of her dissertation. .

I accept the scientific contributions made by Assoc. Prof. Assenova by her dissertation research.

**4. Questions.** In medicine, GPs represent a significant part of the medical community. Do you think that the average GP would have enough time and desire to engage in science or participate in conferences / congresses or would this push him beyond the threshold of burnout syndrome?

**5. Abstract.** The abstract is developed according to the requirements of the Regulations for development of the academic staff of MU - Plovdiv and accurately reflects the main results obtained in the dissertation research.

**6. Conclusion.** The dissertation undoubtedly contains scientific-theoretical and applied research and relevant results, which represent a contribution to general medicine and meet the requirements of ADASRB, the Rules for application of ADASRB and the Rules for development of the academic staff of MU-Plovdiv. Based on the above merits of the dissertation and the indisputable scientific and applied contributions of Assoc. Prof. Radost Asenova, MD, PhD for the dissertation "From burnout to job satisfaction in general practice. general practice / family medicine as a career choice." from the professional field 7.1. Medicine, presented in this dissertation, abstract, results and contributions, I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in the scientific specialty General Medicine, professional field 7.1. Medicine, in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sports to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radost Assenova, MD.

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Prepared by:  
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