

STATEMENT

by Prof. Dobromir Dimitrov Dimitrov, MD, Ph.D. - Rector of MU – Pleven

on the dissertation for awarding the educational and Ph.D. degree  
in the professional field of Medicine  
General Surgery Doctoral Programme

**Author:** Valenin Valentinov Ivanov

**Form of the doctoral study:** part-time

**Department:** Special Surgery, Medical University – Plovdiv

**Subject:** Intraoperative ultrasonography in nonpalpable tumor formations of the mammary gland - application and simulation training

**Doctoral advisors:** Prof. Rosen Dimov, MD, Ph.D., FRCS, Medical University – Plovdiv

Prof. Dr. Blagoy Marinov, MD, Ph.D., - Medical Research Institute, Medical University – Plovdiv

**1. General presentation on the procedure and the Ph.D. student**

The submitted set of paper materials is under Art. 70 (1) of Section I. Acquisition of Educational and Scientific Degree Ph.D. and Scientific Degree Ph.D. at MU-Plovdiv; Regulations of MU-Plovdiv from 28.01.2021 and includes the following documents:

- application to the Rector of MU-Plovdiv for starting the procedure for the defense of a dissertation;
- CV in European format, signed by the doctoral student
- a notarized copy of the doctoral student's diploma of higher education
- orders for enrolment in doctoral studies, for interruption of studies (due to maternity leave), for a continuation of studies; and for leaving the course with the right to defense
- an order for an examination from the individual plan and a corresponding record of passing the examination or the doctoral minimum in the specialty
- the minutes of the departmental council for the preliminary discussion of the dissertation and the decisions that have been taken on the opening of the procedure and the composition of the scientific jury
- dissertation
- abstract
- list of scientific publications on the subject of the dissertation
- copies of scientific publications
- list of participations in scientific forums
- list of citations
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents
- other documents relevant to the procedure

The doctoral candidate has attached 21 publications.

Dr. Valentin Valentinov Ivanov graduated in medicine from Medical University, Plovdiv, in 2016. Since graduation, he has been working as a trainee specialist doctor at the Clinic of Surgery of "Kaspela" University Hospital in Plovdiv. Dr. Valentin Valentinov Ivanov has been working at the University of Plovdiv as a medical doctor since 2007. He was an assistant professor at the Department of Special Surgery, Medical University - Plovdiv in 2017-2018. Since 2018 he has been an assistant professor at the Medical Training and Simulation Center of the Research Institute of MU-Plovdiv.

His postgraduate studies include a number of courses both in Bulgaria and abroad. In 2021, he completed a master's degree course in Health Management at MU - Plovdiv.

## **2. Relevance of the topic**

*Breast cancer* is a socially significant disease that remains the most common challenge in modern oncology and oncologic surgery. This makes this research extremely relevant. There is abundant and ever-increasing literature on the application of organ-sparing surgery to the mammary gland, which makes the scientific work relevant. For Bulgaria, the topic is highly topical due to the rarer use of interventional methods for diagnosis and organ-sparing operations of the mammary gland. The aim of the study is clearly articulated, and three adequate objectives have been defined.

## **3. Knowledge of the problem**

The Ph.D. student demonstrates in-depth knowledge in the field of research, which is evident from the 32-page literature review. He has managed to use professional terminology correctly, which he has analyzed and systematized appropriately. The focus itself on this topical issue shows knowledge of both the problems and challenges in the surgical treatment of breast cancer.

## **4. Methodology of the research**

The following tasks were set:

Task 2. To perform a prospective, randomized, multicenter comparative analysis of two groups of patients, one of which will use sectoral excision alone, and the other group will undergo excision by intraepithelial ultrasonography.

Task 3. To create an original, realistic model allowing the intervention in a simulation environment.

These fully allow the main aim of the thesis to be achieved. The chosen methods and materials are up-to-date and sufficient to perform the tasks. A serious and thorough analysis of the achieved results is achieved through them.

## **5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and contributions**

The abstract and the dissertation are appropriately structured according to all current requirements: the abstract presents 43 figures, 14 tables, and 22 images. The results and conclusions are displayed and illustrated under all current requirements for a proficient scientific study. The statistical methods used are correct and accurate. The successful realization of the study points out the qualities of the dissertation, such as in-depth knowledge, affinity to the novelties of oncological surgery, and creative potential in the implementation of new methods in practice and simulation medicine. The contributions of the dissertation are adequately listed and defined.

## **6. Assessment of publications and personal contributions of the Ph.D. student**

The Ph.D. student provided 3 full-text articles related to the dissertation. He is the first author of all three publications. One of them is under print in a refereed journal. Two of them are from a full-text collection with an ISSN. Furthermore, the results have been presented in a scientific forum with two contributions. The contributions of the Ph.D. student stand out in all the communications presented.

## **7. Critical remarks and recommendations**

I find **Task 1**, as defined in the dissertation, redundant. It is a significant contribution and analysis of the epidemiology of breast cancer for the districts of Plovdiv, Pazardzhik, and Smolyan, yet it does not precisely correspond with the topic and the stated goal of the dissertation.

## CONCLUSION

The dissertation *contains scientific, scientific, and applied results that represent an original contribution to science and meet all the* requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff (LDAS) in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of (LDAS), and the Regulations of the Medical University - Plovdiv. The materials submitted and dissertation results **fully comply** with the specific requirements adopted in connection with the Regulations of the Medical University - Plovdiv for the application of the Law on Academic Research and Development.

The dissertation work shows that the Ph.D. student Dr. Ivanov has significant creative potential, diligence, professional responsibility. He **has** in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty of **General Surgery, demonstrating** professional qualities and skills for independent scientific research.

Given all stated above, I am confident in giving my **positive evaluation** for the research conducted and presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, achieved results, and contributions. I **propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree of Ph.D.** to Dr. Valentin Valentinov Ivanov in the Doctoral Program in General Surgery.

**Date:** 04.03.2022

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**Prof. Dobromir Dimitrov, MD, Ph.D.**