

STANDPOINT

By Assoc. Prof. Vanina Mihaylova, MD

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On a dissertation work, named: *Continuing training as a means to increase the professional competence of medical laboratory technicians*, for the conferral of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in the higher educational area of 7. Healthcare and Sport; professional field: Public Health; scientific specialty "Management of Health Care".

Author: Katya Stefanova Kichukova

Form of the doctoral course: independent

Department: Management of Health Care, Faculty of Public Health, MU-Plovdiv

Academic advisors: Prof. Biyanka Tornyoova, Doctor of Pedagogy; Assoc. Prof. Tanya Taneva, Doctor of Psychology

The present standpoint has been prepared in compliance with Ordinance №P-1248/22.05.2022 by the Rector of MU-Plovdiv.

General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral candidate. Katya Kichukova graduated her higher education in the educational and qualification degrees of Bachelor and Master – *Management of Health Care*, respectively at the Medical Faculty of Trakia University (2002) and MU-Plovdiv (2012) with distinction. She enrolled as a doctoral student in an independent form on 30.01.2020 at the Department of Management of Health Care, Faculty of Public Health, MU-Plovdiv and completed her training with a right to a defense on 19.01.2022.

The presented set of documents in electronic form complies with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria with respect to Art. 32 of the Rules for the Application of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Procedure for acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor at MU-Plovdiv (Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at MU-Plovdiv).

Pertinence of the topic and purposefulness of the set aim and tasks. The thus presented dissertation work synchronizes with the directives of the European Union on the educational systems for building the professional image of healthcare specialists, and *medical laboratory technicians*, in particular. The actual problem for continuing training as a means to increase the professional competence has been addressed adequately and in the light of current events. The approach to the topic, its formulation and structure attest to the author's understanding, thoroughness and affinity to the discussed issues.

The importance of the complex problems has motivated the author to conduct a study on the factors conditional for the readiness of medical laboratory technicians for continuing training, as well as the stimulation on behalf of the state educational policy.

Aim and tasks. The aim has been formulated clearly and precisely. Seven logically inferred tasks were set to study the opinion of in-service medical laboratory technicians, students and laboratory doctors on the need for continuing training as a means to increase their professional competence, respectively, the need for further professional training; motivation for the choice of profession in students and laboratory technicians.

Personal input. The author has engaged personally in all stages of research: planning, designing, coordination and control on the collection of primary information; data analysis.

Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation work, inferences and contributions. The dissertation work contains 192 standard pages, illustrated by 38 figures and 55 tables. It includes 221 sources, of which 112 in Cyrillic and 109 in Latin. The *literature review* (not marked as such) has been approached with enthusiasm and scientific maturity. The historical review, comparison and analysis, based on adequately selected and correctly cited literary sources indicate good orientation and reasoned approach to the topic. Not only summarizing, but also elaborate ideas and components have been included. The needs for continuing training and career development have been determined. The author has emphasized on the descriptors of the European and national qualification frameworks; the specifics of professional training of medical laboratory technicians; regulations; quality management of the activity of medical lab technicians; staff training as part of the management process. The author has underlined the organizational possibilities for continuing training of medical lab technicians, related to professional motivation and alienation.

Methodical consistency of the adopted research method. The precise methodological approach, directed to the analysis of signs, guarantees the significance of the obtained results. The used tools (3 modules are included) is based on cross-sectional sociological studies and covers: surveys – questionnaires and standardized psychological tests, developed for the study. The modules allow for a comparison of the information for the different target groups. The illustration with tables and diagrammes is relevant to the obtained results and contributes to their confirmation.

Inferences. The drawn inferences are consistent with the obtained results. They are well-justified and give an accurate idea of a significant amount of amassed facts. The standpoint on the existing need for continuing training as a means to increase professional competence is crystalized.

The **thesis abstract** has been formatted with respect to all requirements – in volume and structure, and adequately reflects the obtained results and inferences. It meets the requirements for conferral of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor, and concisely presents the content of the dissertation work.

In summary, the *contributions* may be brought down to: the scarce research information on the historical development of laboratory analyses, the emergence and development of the specialty “Medical Laboratory Technician” has been enriched; an original research methodology has been developed to study the subjective need for continuing training of students, medical lab technicians and lab physicians. The results from this research may contribute to changes in the National Regulatory Framework for Life-long Learning of Healthcare Specialists. The need to extend the possibilities for increasing professional competence, development and career through continuing training has been justified.

Evaluation of the publications and the personal contribution of the doctoral candidate. Katya Kichukova has submitted three research works in relation to her dissertation published in international journals. The personal participation of the doctoral students in these articles is confirmed by the fact that she is the first author to two of them, and takes third position in the research team for the third piece of writing. The results from the conducted studies have been delivered at three international scientific forums.

Conclusion. The importance of the studied problem, the thorough treatment and intervention with practical and applied solutions, has led to a thesis with original contribution that satisfies the criteria of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for the Structure and Activity of MU-Plovdiv.

I, therefore, conclude that as a result of her research production, the doctoral candidate has achieved an academic profile that complies with the desired degree. With the above mentioned, I strongly urge the honorable Academic Jury to award to Katya Kichukova the educational and scientific degree of **Doctor** in the scientific specialty "Management of Health Care".

17.06.2022

Plovdiv

Assoc. Prof. Y. Mihaylova-Alakidi

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