



STANDPOINT

From **Professor Dr. Veselin Todorov Belovezhkov, MD, PhD**

Head of Department of
General and Clinical
Pathology – Medical
University of Plovdiv

according to the paper entitled „Forensic analysis of violence against elderly people”, with author Kristina Atanasova Hadzhieva, MD, during procedure for achieving „**Doctoral Degree**” in the field of 7. „**Healthcare and Sport**”, scientific direction „**Medicine**”, specialty „**Forensic medicine and Deontology**”

Dr. Kristina Atanasova Hadzhieva was born on 02.05.1990 in the city of Plovdiv. She completed her secondary education in 2009, with honors, at the High School with a humanitarian profile - Saint Cyril and Methodius High School, Plovdiv. She graduated from the Medical University - Plovdiv in 2015. From the middle of November 2016, she was enrolled by order of the rector of the Medical University - Plovdiv as an assistant in the Department of Forensic Medicine and Deontology of the Medical University of Plovdiv after winning from competition, being an assistant until now in the department of the same name, with a profile of English language teaching. In 2019, he successfully passed the state exam for acquiring a specialty in the health care system in the December session and acquired the specialty "Forensic Medicine and Deontology". He is a member of the following scientific and professional societies: the Bulgarian Society of Forensic Medicine, the Bulgarian Medical Union, the Union of scientists in Bulgaria.

The basis of his scientific work is the topic of violence against the elderly and its morphological and clinical manifestations, specifically in the routine forensic expert work.

Research in recent years indicates that violence in people over 65 years of age is a worldwide medical problem, specifically expressed in the inability of this age group of people to protect their mental and physical health. Like other medical specialties, this global problem does not escape the field of forensic medicine. It can be categorically noted that, compared to the foreign scientific literature, seriously discussed in the specialized international forums, in Bulgaria there is a lack of sufficient scientific data related to the issue of physical violence against the elderly. The information that the literature provides us leads to the conclusion that there are still significant difficulties in the timely diagnosis by medical professionals of victims of violence. It is for this reason that work is being done daily on the preparation of a successful algorithm for diagnosing such problems related to this age group.

Bearing in mind what has been said so far, the scope of the dissertation work has been successfully selected in view of the need for a detailed description of the problem related to physical violence. New literature was used in the creation of the dissertation and thus it spanned 81 pages and was structured within 11 chapters containing over tables and charts depicting various data on physical abuse of the elderly. The chapters are divided as follows: 1. Introduction II. Literature review III. Purpose and objectives IV. Material and methods V. Results VI. Summary and discussion of results VII. Application in forensic medical practice VIII. Conclusion IX. Dissertation Contributions X. Publications and Scientific Communications Related to Dissertation XI. Bibliography.

A large number of author collectives are presented in the Bibliography section from various Bulgarian and world studies on the matter. Dissertation is well written, using literary Bulgarian language that is sufficiently accessible even for readers who are not medical specialists in the field. It is noteworthy that the dissertation student shows an enviable knowledge of literary sources, and the dissertation itself is supported by sufficient information and examples, structured and described correctly and extremely informative.

Already in the literature review of the dissertation, the main manifestations, as well as the mechanisms of occurrence of the types of trauma, consequences of

physical violence against the elderly are advocated, and at the end, a reference to the mortality in this age group is also presented.

The purpose of the dissertation is to give an accurate and clear forensic formulation of the problem, to make a detailed retrospective study of the manifestation of the problem and its comparison with the data from other Bulgarian and foreign authors who worked on this issue, and to give guidelines for solving this problem (through the preparation of work algorithms for the timely identification of victims of violence). The main target groups of the retrospective study were successfully targeted, namely elderly people, victims of physical violence, who passed through the forensic medicine unit in which the dissertation student worked in his professional direction during the analyzed 5 years (2016-2020).

In the chapter "Materials and methods" it is described in detail and in an appropriate volume by which methodology the analyzed nearly 442 cases of violence against the elderly will be researched and presented. Adequately applied methods by Dr. Kristina Hadzhieva have allowed her to make an excellent comparative assessment of the morphological characteristics of the disabilities and social life factors with the data provided by the foreign and Bulgarian authors.

In the chapter "Results" the data on the types of elder abuse are comprehensively presented in tables and diagrams, which tables and diagrams greatly facilitate the reader in following the information provided. The reading of the above-mentioned chapter clearly shows that Dr. Hadzhieva has skilfully used a number of scientific techniques that make it possible to draw scientific conclusions related to the problem. It is noteworthy that the results provided in the dissertation of Dr. Kristina Hadzhieva are carefully arranged according to the relevant indicators in the statistical maps.

The discussion of the results was carried out consistently and methodically with respect to each indicator in the statistical maps and was compared with what was presented as data from the studies of other Bulgarian and foreign authors who worked on this problem.

The conclusion of the dissertation is clear, concise and comprehensively formulated, providing us with answers to the questions and objectives set in

previous chapters. In the "Bibliography" section, there are no significant errors in the spelling of the names of the literature used or its authors.

CONCLUSION

The peer-reviewed dissertation, entitled "Forensic analysis of violence against the elderly", authored by Dr. Kristina Atanasova Hadzhieva, is a complex and comprehensive study of the morphological and socio-habitual manifestations of physical violence against the elderly in the field of forensic medicine. The dissertation is a systematic and comprehensive analysis, accompanied by data from other world and Bulgarian authors working on the problem.

The peer-reviewed work is factually sound and makes a significant contribution to clarifying the problem of types of violence against a certain age group. The idea of the dissertation is precisely chosen, and the obtained results are successfully presented, discussed and summarized within the same. The dissertation also has a significant contribution of a purposefully applied nature in the face of the presented variants of algorithms for working with elderly people suspected of physical violence.

Everything described in detail above gives me the reason to give a POSITIVE assessment of the dissertation work of Dr. Kristina Hadzhieva and also to recommend to the honorable members of the scientific jury, of which I am a member, to award the author an educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

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Professor Dr. Veselin T. Belovezhkov, MD, PhD

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