

# SHORT ACADEMIC REVIEW

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**Subject:** PhD-thesis for the award of an **educational and scientific degree “PhD”**

**to Dr. Plamena Milenova Dineva**

PhD-thesis topic: "**Forensic characterization of injuries from falls from different heights**"

Scientific supervisors:

**Prof. Dr. Pavel Timonov, MD, PhD**

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ana Nikolova, MD, PhD**

## **Relevance of the topic and characteristics of the PhD work**

The PhD-thesis of Dr. Plamena Milenova Dineva is a classically conducted scientific study in the field of forensic medicine and includes the following parts: introduction, literature review, aim and objectives, material and methods, results, discussion, application in forensic practice, conclusion, contributions of the PhD work, bibliography.

At the beginning, Dr. Dineva provides information about the abbreviations used in the text. This is followed by a short “**Introduction**” in which information is briefly presented about the importance of falling from a height in forensic practice, as well as the role of the expert in determining the “manner of death”.

In the chapter “**Literature Review**”, the characteristics of traumatic injuries to the body, when falling from different heights, are described sequentially, with the author describing sequentially for each of the heights she examined: skin injuries represented by abrasions, bruises and lacerations; those of soft tissues, represented by injuries to the soft cranial coverings, thoracic and abdominal muscles, as well as bones in different parts of the human body and injuries to internal organs. A separate subchapter presents the characteristics of traumatic injuries according to gender, age, body mass index and mode of death, and the chapter ends with a conclusion regarding the division of this type of traumatic injuries and

their definition in Bulgaria, as well as the specificity and lack of distinction depending on height.

In the next section "**Aim and objectives**", Dr. Dineva formulates the aim of her study, based on three points: obtaining an objective forensic characterization of traumatic injuries that occurred when falling <3 meters the height of the fall, such when falling from 3 to 9 meters the height of the fall and when falling >9 meters the height of the fall. To achieve this goal, four tasks directly related to it have been formulated.

The chapter "**Material and Methods**" describes the bodies of 104 people over 18 years old who died because of a fall from a height, who were the subject of research in the Department of Forensic Medicine at the University Hospital "St. George", Plovdiv for the period 2017 - 2021. A model of statistical maps is presented, and the questionnaire, descriptive and graphical methods included in the study are also described.

The "**Results**" section begins with a description of the demographic characteristics and frequencies of the case group – gender, age, height of the corpse and height of fall, place, cause and type of death. Interesting data are presented correlating the type of death, including murder, suicide and accident with the type of fatal trauma, as well as the height from which the body fell. The types of injuries to the skin, in the cranial cavity and traumatic brain injury, chest cavity, organ involvement, as well as the morphological findings are described in detail, and the same are correlated again with the three types of heights set in the goal.

The detailed description and the many tables and diagrams are impressive, each of which is accompanied by a brief description of the results obtained.

In the "**Discussion**" chapter, the results of the objectives are again briefly presented, the own findings and are compared with those in the literature available to the PhD-student. The obtained and described results correspond to those presented in the results obtained by other authors, and despite their differences, a high percentage of polytraumatic injury is shown, presented and expressed differently in individual cases.

The case presented in the chapter "**Application in forensic practice**" demonstrates the importance of the study underlying the PhD-work and provides a guiding algorithm for the sequence and differentiation of the circumstances and morphological features leading to the formulation of the correct forensic conclusion.

The PhD-work project ended with "**Conclusions**", which summarizes the finding, meaning and open questions that an attempt was made to discuss in the scientific work. The relevant recommendations are made and the ways for implementation are outlined.

The "**Contributions**" of the PhD-thesis are nine in total, divided into three groups of three contributions, respectively: of a cognitive nature, of a scientifically applied and original nature and of a confirmatory nature.

**The bibliography** contains 67 titles, 1 of which is in Bulgarian.

In addition, the presented abstract is a synthesized material, including the most important elements of the dissertation work, as well as three publications related to the topic.

### **Critical notes and suggestions**

Similar ones were made by me at previous moments in the procedure, and I find that most of them have been fulfilled. I could recommend that after the procedure, the research be expanded, and future results and conclusions drawn from them be published in refereed and indexed scientific journals.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the PhD work thus submitted for evaluation for the award of the ESD "PhD" represents an interesting and fully completed scientific work, which includes all the mandatory elements, results, applications and conclusions. The same could be continued and expanded, as the information in the work could be of assistance to a number of medical and legal specialists in their routine practice and scientific research.

Based on this, I convincingly give my **positive assessment and vote "Positive" the award of the ESD "PhD" to Dr. Plamena Milenova Dineva**, in the PhD program "Forensic Medicine and deontology ", field of higher education 7. Health and Sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine, and I recommend on the other members of the esteemed jury to support the candidate with a positive vote.

Заличено на основание  
Чл.5 §1, б. "В" Регламент (ЕС)2016/679



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