

STATEMENTby **Professor Slavi Dimitrov Delchev, MD, PhD****Department of Anatomy, Histology and Embryology, Medical Faculty,
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Elected as a member of a scientific jury by order of
Rector of Medical University - Plovdiv P-1869/26.03.2026
on a research dissertation for conferring the educational and scientific degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Higher education area: 7. Healthcare and Sports; Professional area: 7.1. Medicine; Doctoral Programme in Forensic medicine and deontology, 03.01.59

Author: Plamena Milenova Dineva, MD**Type of doctoral studies:** individual preparation**Department:** Department of Forensic Medicine and Deontology**Topic:** *Forensic characterization of injuries from falls from different heights***Doctoral advisors:**

Professor Pavel Timonov, MD, PhD - Department of Forensic Medicine and Deontology, Faculty of Medicine, Medical University – Plovdiv

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1. Presentation of the procedure and the PhD student

The presented set of materials on electronic media is in accordance with Art. 70 (1) of I. Section. Acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" at MU-Plovdiv; Regulations for Academic Development at MU-Plovdiv from 2021 and includes the following documents:

– Application Form addressed to the Rector of MU-Plovdiv to initiate a procedure for defence of a doctoral thesis; CV in European format; Rector's orders for entering doctoral studies and striking off with the right to defend a dissertation; proceedings from the Department Meeting on the preliminary discussion of the doctoral thesis, the dissertation paper itself; synopsis of the latter; a list of the research publications relevant to the dissertation topic; statement on the originality and authenticity of the submitted documents.

The doctoral student has attached 3 (three) full-text publications on the topic of the dissertation, of which 1 in an indexed edition (WoS) and 2 in national editions, of which 1 is included in the reference list of NACID. I have no comments on the submitted documents.

Dr. Plamena Dineva graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of Trakia University - Stara Zagora in 2016. She worked at the University Hospital "St. George" EAD - Plovdiv as a resident physician from 2017 to 2020, and since 2020 as a physician at the same hospital. Since 2018, she has been appointed as an assistant professor at the Department of Forensic Medicine and Deontology of the Medical University - Plovdiv. Since 2022, she has been the Head of the Department of Forensic Medicine at the University Hospital "St. Panteleimon" AD - Yambol.

2. Topicality of the research

The dissertation examines the causes of death and traumatic injuries resulting from falls from different heights. In the available literature sources, there is not enough systematized and in-depth scientific information dedicated entirely to injuries from falls from heights. At present, there are no established uniform criteria for a comprehensive assessment of injuries from falls from heights, which necessitates further targeted research in this direction, as well as the development of practically

applicable criteria and algorithms in forensic practice. This makes the conducted study and the obtained results valuable and significant for clinical practice and forensic structures.

3. Knowledge of the problem

The doctoral student has thoroughly studied the available reports and publications on the problem. The information has been thoroughly analyzed and systematized in the literature review, which includes 68 sources. Based on the available data from the literature, the author has divided the types of cases of death from falls into three main groups, according to the height of the fall. The precise organization of this section has allowed for the formation of a correct statement of the problem and the formulation of the goals and objectives.

4. Methods of study

One hundred and four cases of deaths from falls from a height were studied in the Department of Forensic Medicine for the period 2017-2021, and individual statistical cards were filled in. Adequately selected methods were applied - survey method, descriptive method, statistical processing and graphic analysis. All this gives me reason to state that the selected research methodologies fully allow achieving the set goal and obtaining an adequate answer to the tasks solved in the dissertation work.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation paper and its contributions

The dissertation work covers 129 pages and is structured according to generally accepted requirements in the following sections: introduction, literature review, aim and objectives, material and methods, results, discussion and summary, application in forensic practice, conclusion, contributions, bibliography.

The introduction briefly and clearly touches on the main aspects of the study – the current state of the problem and the need to deepen and expand knowledge in this area.

The literature review is divided into separate chapters that examine in detail the characteristics of the causes of death when falling from different heights. A sufficient volume of literary sources has been used. A relatively small part (12%) of the sources used is from the last 10 years, but this is probably due to the insufficient number of publications on the topic and the need to analyze all previous studies. The review thus made served as a summary of the state of the problem, on the basis of which the aim and objectives were logically derived.

The set goals are three and are clearly formulated, the tasks are four and cover the main aspects of the scientific issues under consideration.

The section "Material and Methods" describes in detail the units of observation used (deceased, as a result of altitude trauma), the formed groups, the selection and processing of data for the purposes of the study, the applied survey, descriptive and statistical methods.

The section "Results" covers 63 pages and is arranged logically, according to the previously set tasks. The data have been processed and presented in 182 figures (91 tables and 91 diagrams). The figures are of excellent quality and comprehensively present the results of the analyses performed. The diagrams have been made with skill. The results are authentic and reliable.

In the "Discussion" section, the obtained results have been analyzed, summarized and compared with the data from the literature. A characterization of the distribution of the individual signs of the processed cases by gender, age, circumstances of death has been made. The findings in the individual groups have been discussed in detail - falls from a height of less than 3 meters, falls from 3 to 9 meters

and from a height of more than 9 meters. This approach has allowed the obtained results to be clearly systematized, as well as to be compared with available data from other authors.

In the "Conclusion" section, conclusions have been drawn that are logically related to the tasks set and are according to the results obtained in the individual groups.

Three original contributions of a scientific-applied nature and three confirmatory ones, based on the obtained results, are presented.

6. Evaluation of the publications and the personal contribution of the PhD student

The publications reflecting the results of the dissertation are: 1 article in an indexed international database (Acta morphologica et anthropologica), 2 articles in national journals (Science and Research, Scientific Proceedings of the SUB - Plovdiv). Two of the publications are in English. The doctoral student is the lead author of 3 of the full-text publications and is the sole author of 2 of them.

The doctoral student is familiar with the main stages of the study in detail and has actively participated in the recruitment of cases, analyses and statistical work. The processing of the results, analysis, documentation through tables and figures of the obtained data were carried out with skill and experience.

Critical notes and recommendations (on the conducted research and the presented materials).

I have no critical remarks. My recommendation to the dissertation candidate is aimed at wider presentation and dissemination of the results of this dissertation work at scientific forums in Bulgaria and abroad, with the aim of exchanging creative ideas and further developing the research topic.

7. Synopsis of the dissertation

The abstract is comprehensive and includes the main parts of the dissertation work - introduction, aim and objectives, material and methods, results, discussion, conclusion with conclusions, contributions. Its volume is 51 pages. Dr. Dineva has presented conclusions that are based on the results obtained in the individual groups. In conclusion, the abstract is made according to the requirements and reflects the structure and content of the dissertation work.


CONCLUSION

The dissertation *contains scientific, applied science and applied results, representing an original contribution to science and meeting all requirements* of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations on the application of the above-mentioned law and the Regulations of MU - Plovdiv.

The dissertation shows that Plamena Dineva, MD **possesses** deep theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty of Forensic medicine and deontology by **demonstrating** qualities and skills for independent conduction of a research investigation.

On the basis of the above-mentioned facts, I am deeply convinced in giving my *positive assessment* of the reviewed dissertation, synopsis, results and contributions and *propose to the honourable Research Council to confer the educational and scientific degree of Doctor of Philosophy* on Plamena Milenova Dineva, MD in the doctoral programme in Forensic medicine and deontology, cipher 03.01.59.

09 April, 2026

Statement prepared by: 

Prof. Slavi Delchev, MD, PhD