

STATEMENT

on the dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

by **Assoc. Prof. Kamelia Kostadinova Bogdanova, PhD**

MU – Sofia, Faculty of Public Health “Prof. Tzekomir Vodenitcharov, MD, DSc”
External Member of the Scientific Jury, pursuant to Order No. R-4494/06.08.2026

Regarding: Dissertation thesis for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”

Professional field: 7.4. Public Health

Doctoral Programme: “Healthcare Management”

Author: Zlatina Ivanova Nikolova-Rancheva

Form of doctoral studies: Independent preparation

Department: “Midwifery Care”

Title: “Medical and Social Aspects and Expected Effects of Elective Cesarean Section”

Scientific supervisors: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nikoleta Parahuleva-Rogacheva, PhD,
and Assoc. Prof. Milena Sandeva, PhD

1. General Presentation of the Procedure and the Doctoral Candidate

The submitted set of documents and materials has been prepared and presented in full compliance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation, and Article 70 (1), Section I – Acquisition of the Educational and Scientific Degree “Doctor” and “Doctor of Sciences” – of the Regulations on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University – Plovdiv.

Zlatina Nikolova-Rancheva was enrolled as a doctoral candidate under an individual study programme at the Department of “Midwifery Care” of the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – Plovdiv. The dissertation thesis was preliminarily discussed at an extended Department Council meeting, Minutes No. 7/24.06.2026, and approved by the Faculty Council, Minutes No. 8/14.07.2026.

2. Brief Biographical Information

Zlatina Nikolova-Rancheva graduated with a degree in “Midwifery” from the Medical University – Plovdiv in 2010. In 2012, she obtained a Master’s degree in “Healthcare Management” from the same university. In 2014, she obtained a Master’s degree in “Preventive Pedagogy” from Plovdiv University “Paisii

Hilendarski". The doctoral candidate has acquired a specialty in "Hospital Hygiene, Infection Prevention and Control".

3. Relevance and Timeliness of the Topic

Cesarean section is one of the most frequently performed surgical procedures in contemporary obstetric practice and is a life-saving method of delivery in certain medical conditions. At the same time, a sustained increase in the rate of operative deliveries has been observed worldwide over recent decades, making this issue an important medical and public health concern. A particularly relevant aspect is cesarean section at maternal request in the absence of medical indications. This raises questions related to maternal and neonatal safety, women's autonomy, informed decision-making, and the role of healthcare professionals. The issue also has an important medical and social dimension related to the use of healthcare resources, the costs of medical care, and the possible short- and long-term consequences for the woman, the newborn, and the family. Of particular importance is the cumulative effect of repeated cesarean sections and the associated risk of obstetric and postpartum complications.

4. Knowledge of the Problem

The author demonstrates in-depth and systematic knowledge of the issues related to cesarean section and its application as a method of delivery, considering them in the context of medical, psychological, social, and ethical aspects. The factors associated with the increasing rate of cesarean section are analyzed, including medical indications, women's personal attitudes and expectations, fear of childbirth, previous negative experiences, and the influence of the social environment and healthcare professionals. The issue of maternal-request cesarean section in the absence of medical indications is examined in depth, with the benefits and possible short- and long-term risks for the mother and newborn presented. The importance of informed choice and women's autonomy is appropriately addressed, as well as the need for a balanced approach between the individual right to choose, medical safety, and the rational use of healthcare resources. Thus, the author outlines the complex medical and social nature of the research problem and the need for its comprehensive investigation.

5. Research Methodology

The aim of the present dissertation is to investigate and analyze the medical and social factors and the expected effects of maternal-request cesarean section. The research objectives are logically justified and correspond to the aim of the study. The material and methods have been appropriately selected in accordance with the subject matter and objectives of the research. The study has a combined retrospective

epidemiological and medical-social design and was conducted in two stages, using documentary analysis, a survey, and a semi-structured interview. In the second stage, a case-control design was applied, involving 210 women following cesarean section and 210 women following vaginal delivery. Appropriate statistical methods were used for data analysis, ensuring the reliability and validity of the results.

6. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and its contributions

The dissertation is logically and consistently structured and includes a literature review, aim, objectives and hypothesis, materials and methods, results and discussion, findings, conclusions, recommendations, contributions, references, and appendices. The literature review encompasses current scientific sources and presents the main theoretical and practical aspects of the research problem. The results are presented systematically through tables and graphs and focus on the analysis of medical and social factors associated with maternal-request cesarean section, as well as the attitudes, fears, and experiences of women undergoing different modes of delivery. A comparative analysis of the groups was conducted to investigate the factors influencing the choice of mode of delivery, as well as pain assessment and neonatal condition. The discussion is well reasoned and clearly related to the aim and objectives of the study. The contributions have scientific and practical significance. The results expand existing knowledge regarding the medical and social factors and attitudes associated with the choice of maternal-request cesarean section. The recommendations are practically oriented and applicable to obstetric counseling and an individualized approach to pregnant women. The findings and conclusions are logically justified and derive from the obtained results. The recommendations are focused on the practical application of the findings and on improving approaches to addressing the research problem.

7. Evaluation of the publications and the doctoral candidate's personal contribution

Doctoral candidate Zlatina Nikolova-Rancheva has presented three scientific publications, two of which have been published in journals abstracted and indexed in international scientific databases, while the third has been published in a journal indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. In two of the publications, the doctoral candidate is the first author, which demonstrates her active involvement in the research process. The submitted publications meet the requirements of the Medical University – Plovdiv for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” and are thematically related to the dissertation, reflecting key results of the research conducted. The doctoral candidate has made a substantial personal contribution to all major stages of the research process, including the planning and organization of the study, data collection and analysis, interpretation of the results,

and preparation of the scientific publications. Her contribution is substantial to the development of the methodology, implementation of the research, analysis of the obtained results, and formulation of the scientific conclusions.

8. Abstract

The abstract has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Medical University – Plovdiv and adequately reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation. Its content is clearly structured and logically and consistently presents the aims, methodology, results, and conclusions of the study, as well as the scientific contributions of the doctoral candidate.

CONCLUSION

The submitted dissertation thesis entitled “Medical and Social Aspects and Expected Effects of Elective Cesarean Section” by doctoral candidate Zlatina Nikolova-Rancheva meets the criteria for a completed dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”. The dissertation has clearly formulated aims and objectives, an appropriately selected methodology, an in-depth analysis and discussion of the obtained results, as well as scientific and scientific-practical contributions. The dissertation is relevant and addresses significant medical and social aspects related to the choice of maternal-request cesarean section, the factors influencing the mode of delivery, and the attitudes and factors associated with the choice of mode of delivery. The obtained results have practical significance for obstetric practice and for an individualized approach to counseling pregnant women.

I consider that the dissertation thesis fully complies with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation, and the Regulations of the Medical University – Plovdiv. Based on the above, I give my positive assessment and recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury award the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” to Zlatina Nikolova-Rancheva in the field of higher education 7. Health Care and Sports, professional field 7.4. Public Health, Doctoral Programme “Healthcare Management”.

29.09.2026

Prepared by: 
Assoc. Prof. K. Bogdanova, PhD

Заличено на основание
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