

Position

From Assoc. prof. Hristo Kirilov Zlatanov, PhD

Military Medical Academy – Sofia

Member of the Scientific Jury according to Order № P109-438/07.10.2021. of a dissertation for educational and scientific degree “PhD”.

Professional field: 7.1. "Medicine", scientific specialty "Otorhinolaryngology"

Author: Dr. Assen Georgiev Assenov

Topic: "VOICE REHABILITATION OF PATIENTS WITH LARYNGECTOMY THROUGH VOICE PROSTHESIS"

I. General presentation of the procedure

The presented set of materials on paper and electronic data storage is in accordance with the requirements for acquiring Educational and Scientific academic degree "PhD" according to the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Regulations of Medical University – Varna.

II. Biographical data about the doctoral student

Dr. Asen Assenov was born on January 13, 1970. In the city of Plovdiv. In 1997 graduated from HMI Plovdiv, majoring in medicine with excellent results. In the period 1997-2000 he worked as an ENT resident at the 1st City Polyclinic in Plovdiv. From 2000 to 2009 he held the position of resident in the ENT Department of MHAT "Plovdiv", as in 2003 he acquired the specialty “Ear-nose-throat diseases”. Since July 2009 he has been the head of the ENT department at the same hospital. In 2011 he completed a master's degree in Health Management at the Faculty of Public Health of the Medical University - Plovdiv. From March 2016 he is an Assistant at the Department of ENT, Medical University of Plovdiv. He has passed a number of additional qualification courses in the country and abroad. He has actively participated in a number of international and national scientific forums. In the role of trainer he takes an active part in qualification courses in rhinoplasty and functional endonasal sinus surgery. Dr. Assen Assenov is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Union, Bulgarian

Society of Otorhinolaryngology, Bulgarian Rhinological Society, PVSF Pacific Voice of San Francisco, ERS European Rhinology Society, SAPAAC - The Society of Asia Pacific Anti-Aging Course.

III. Topicality of the topic

Unfortunately, due to the poor prevention in our country, many cases of laryngeal cancer are diagnosed in the third / fourth stage, who require radical treatment with complete laryngectomy and / or chemo-radiation therapy. Despite its life-saving nature, this surgery significantly reduces the patient's quality of life. The developed dissertation discusses the topic of improving the quality of life of these patients by providing the opportunity to speak. This issue is especially relevant, as a limited number of centers in the country perform voice rehabilitation with voice prostheses of laryngectomy patients.

IV. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is well structured in 114 pages. It begins with an introduction, a thorough literature review of laryngeal carcinoma, complete laryngectomy, voice prosthesis placement techniques, rehabilitation, and patient training for prosthetic care. The chapter "Materials and methods" describes in detail the standard and modified by the author technique. The results present the group of patients participating in the research - a total of 51 patients (47 men and 4 women). Surgical results and complications are described. The Discussion section compares the different techniques for performing tracheoesophageal puncture and postoperative complications. Special attention is paid to video fluoroscopy as a method of preoperative planning by measuring the thickness of the tracheoesophageal septum. Considerable attention is paid to the financial factors related to prosthesis placement. The fact that the author focuses not only on the purely medical aspects of voice rehabilitation, but also on the socio-economic ones, is really delightful. His desire to establish a model for reimbursement of medical devices (in this case the voice prosthesis) shows that in addition to high professionalism, the author shows undisguised empathy for the situation of patients. Logical conclusions have been made. At the end of the scientific work, the author describes the contributions of scientific-theoretical and scientific-practical nature, whose main purpose is to promote this type of voice rehabilitation and create protocols for voice prosthetics and

prevention of foreseeable complications.

V. Knowledge of the problem

The author demonstrates good knowledge of the problem of vocal rehabilitation of patients undergone laryngectomy

VI. Research methods and evaluation of the dissertation

Despite its retrospective nature, the information from the clinical trial is complete and sufficient to gather the necessary results. That is why I appreciate the scientific work of Dr. Assen Assenov as an extremely useful read for both graduates and specialists. Modifying an existing surgical technique in order to increase the safety of the intervention on the one hand and to adapt to the negative conditions of the health care system, which does not finance prosthetic consumables, is commendable.

VII. Contribution and significance of the scientific work for practice and science

The contribution of this work is great, as the purpose is to promote voice prosthesis and training of medical and non-medical staff. The first surgical results of the operative technique modified by the author are presented. A comparative phoniatric analysis was performed in Bulgarian patients with alaryngeal speech - esophageal and after implantation of a voice prosthesis.

VIII. Evaluation of dissertation publications

In connection with the dissertation, 3 articles on the topic have been published in scientific journals, as well as scientific communications presented at national forums.

IX. Personal participation of the PhD candidate

I appreciate the personal participation of the doctoral student in the preparation of the dissertation, given the fact that he conducted some of the research, actively participated in the modification of the surgical technique in order to change the technique of tracheoesophageal

puncture and implantation of voice prosthesis to a safer and more cost-effective one.

X. Abstract

The abstract meets the content of the dissertation and the requirements for one. The latter is written systematically and summarizes the content of the dissertation.

Conclusion

The presented scientific work is innovative. It addresses a socially significant issue concerning the quality of life of patients undergone laryngectomy. The scientific work summarizes the known techniques for tracheoesophageal puncture and placement of a voice prosthesis and offers a modified technique that is based on reducing the complications of surgical intervention and reducing the financial costs of the patient for the instruments. The work is convincing and meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the regulations for its application, for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "PhD" in the scientific specialty "Otorhinolaryngology".

07.12.2021
Sofia

Assoc. Prof. Hristo Kirilov Zlatanov, PhD

