

STATEMENT OF OPINION

From Prof. Snezhanka Kostadinova Ovcharova, PhD

Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", Faculty "International Economics and Administration", member of Scientific Jury in accordance with Order № P-109-567/09.12.2021r of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna

for dissertation on the topic: "PATIENT SATISFACTION AS A PREREQUISITE FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES IN A MEDICAL CENTER"

author IVAN RUMENOV TODOROV

for the award of an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education " 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.7. Administration and management, in the scientific specialty "Organization and management outside the sphere of material production (in healthcare)"

I. General evaluation of the dissertation

The dissertation is developed in a volume of 164 pages and includes an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, appendices and a list of references. The dissertation contains 2 tables, 33 figures. 132 literature sources were used, of which 27 were in Cyrillic and 105 in Latin.

Relevance of the dissertation. The dissertation treats a relevant and important topic related to the satisfaction of Bulgarian patients with the received medical care. The reforms in the healthcare sector predetermine the new role of the patient in the healthcare system in Bulgaria. However, research in this area is scarce and unpopular. In a pandemic, the problem of providing quality medical care is even more difficult. And customer satisfaction with the services provided is an extremely important issue for the success of any organization. The patient assessment of medical care and administrative services enables the management of medical institutions to reveal its influencing factors and to improve their activities in accordance with the highest medical standards. In addition, the doctoral student has 11 years of professional experience as a marketing manager and administrative director in a private medical complex. In this regard, I believe that I. Todorov convincingly presents the relevance of the chosen topic in the introduction.

The structure of the dissertation is logically consistent. The introduction contains the necessary components for scientific work. The purpose and tasks are correctly stated, accurately reflecting the research activity of the doctoral student, within the presented limitations. The presented three theses are a good basis for conducting the dissertation research. I think that the object of study could be formulated more precisely. The author uses appropriate research tools to ensure accuracy and objectivity of the results.

The titles included in the bibliographic reference of the dissertation show that the doctoral student knows the literature and the normative base in the researched subject area, and this is a prerequisite for discovering unsolved problems, for systematization and derivation of solutions.

In the first chapter of the study I. Todorov shows in-depth knowledge and analytical skills in the review of the scientific literature on the quality of medical care. The conceptual apparatus

concerning patient satisfaction is clarified in detail. The relationship between the quality of medical care, administrative service and patient satisfaction is considered. The role of the management of the medical institution for quality management and offering comprehensive care in patient care was emphasized. The author analyzes and comments on ways to measure and study patient satisfaction. The factors influencing patient satisfaction in Bulgaria are systematized - medical, technological, interpersonal, image, administrative, communication, social, institutional and moral factors. Good practices for achieving patient satisfaction from countries with modern healthcare are shown. I appreciate the author's personal opinion in the theoretical discussion and the presentation of significant problems in the medical and administrative care of patients.

In the second chapter, the doctoral student analyzes and evaluates the satisfaction of Bulgarian patients with the received medical care. The results of a survey are presented through a written survey among three groups of respondents - patients, doctors and health managers. The doctoral student establishes the state of satisfaction in three directions: the channels of communication in need of medical information; the factors influencing the patient's choice of medical institution; the principles on which patients' sense of satisfaction is based. The opinion of the health managers and doctors in Bulgaria about the leading factors influencing the satisfaction of the patients and their attraction is analyzed. The weight of the individual factors for patient satisfaction, the possibility of conflict between the quality of health care and the level of satisfaction were determined. The chapter concludes with summary and conclusions, comparing the opinions of the three groups of respondents on the main factors of patient satisfaction.

The third chapter presents recommendations that confirm the role of systematic research on the level of patient satisfaction in Bulgaria and taking timely measures. The doctoral student develops and proposes specific recommendations and measures for: improving the medical organization and health care; for improvement of the administrative and non-medical services in the medical centers; to improve communication and relationships with patients in the medical institution; to increase the motivation of the staff in the medical centers; and to improve the internal environment and medical infrastructure in the medical institution. I appreciate the ability of the doctoral student to reveal significant problems in medical health care, to seek and find specific solutions for higher patient satisfaction.

The conclusion of the dissertation briefly summarizes the results of the research.

II. Contributions in the dissertation

The report on the contributions presented in the abstract is correct and really reflects the main achievements of the doctoral student as a result of his own research.

It is worth noting that the author's professional position as Administrative Director will enable him to monitor the effectiveness of the measures taken and to plan further research to improve the quality of health care.

III. Notes and questions on the dissertation

Without belittling the qualities of the dissertation, I will make some remarks:

- 1) The object of study must be more precisely formulated;
- 2) In paragraph 3.4. the author presents *Recommendations and measures to increase the motivation of the staff in the medical institution*, focusing mainly on material incentives. It should not be forgotten that the human resources management system includes: attestation, training,

career development, labor design, remuneration, which are interrelated and the exclusion of one activity creates dissatisfaction in staff. The PhD student still mentions the continuing qualification of medical teams in section 3.1, but a more appropriate place for this would be in paragraph 3.4. Health managers must keep in mind that only a systematic, not a functional, approach to managing people creates motivation;

3) Self-citation was used - No 26 in the list of used literature.

The current issues discussed in the dissertation raise additional questions, which may be the subject of further research. In this regard, my question to the PhD student is: Are there new aspects of patient satisfaction in a Covid-19 pandemic?

VI. Abstract and publications on the dissertation

The abstract reproduces the content of the dissertation. It has been prepared in a volume of 48 pages and includes the sections: introduction, purpose and tasks, materials and methods, conclusions and recommendations, conclusion, contributions to the dissertation and a list of publications. It would be good to present a table with the content of the dissertation in the abstract.

Of the presented total of 8 publications - 6 are author's, in Bulgarian and two are co-authored in English, presented at an international scientific conference. I believe that these publications really present the achievements of the doctoral student and are representative enough to make them public to the academic community and stakeholders.

V. Conclusion

The dissertation of doctoral student Ivan Todorov is a completed study of a significant and relevant scientific - applied problem. The research goals and tasks set in the paper have been fulfilled. The scientific and applied contributions contained in the work enrich the existing knowledge in the field of management and marketing of medical institutions. The achieved results are important for the further improvement of the quality of medical health care in Bulgaria and thus ensure high patient satisfaction.

Based on the above, I give a positive assessment of the dissertation on "Patient satisfaction as a prerequisite for improving the quality of medical care and administrative services in the hospital" and I propose the distinguished members of the Scientific Jury to award doctoral student Ivan Rumenov Todorov **educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.7. Administration and management, specialty "Organization and management outside the field of material production (in healthcare)".**

12.01.2022 г.
Varna

Reviewer:
/Prof. Snezhanka Ovcharova, PhD/