

## STATEMENT

by **Prof. Juliana Krumova Marinova, MD, PhD**

Regarding the dissertation

**“The influence of the Bulgarian folk dances on the health of the students from  
Medical University of Varna”**

**By the senior teacher Julieta Georgieva Videnova**

PhD-candidate in a free form of training at the PhD program  
specialty **„Public health management”** (*enrolled with an order №109-469/20.07.2018*), professional direction 7.4 „Public Health”, Field of higher education  
7. Healthcare and sports

Herewith, I submit this statement of opinion as a member of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order № R 109-344 / 09.10.2019 of the Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna, based on a decision of the Academic Council of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna (Protocol №143/27.09.2019) for the evaluation of the dissertation work by Julieta Georgieva Videnova – a PhD-candidate, free form of training at the Department of Social Medicine and Healthcare Organization, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University of Varna, with scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Desislava Ivanova Vankova, MD and a scientific consultant Dr. Sylvia Pavlova Nikolova. The dissertation work was discussed and proposed for a final defense by the extended departmental council of the Department of Social Medicine and Healthcare Organization, Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

**Short biography and career development** of the PhD candidate: Julieta Georgieva Videnova was born in 1970 in Varna. She was part of the Bulgarian National Athletics Team (1986/1990) and a multiple national champion in the sprint disciplines for girls, holds the national record of 200 m. running in a hall, she won the sixth place in the European Championship for girls in 1987 at Birmingham, UK, participated in the 1988 World Cup for Girls in Sudbury, Canada. In 1994 Julieta Videnova graduated from the National Sports Academy with a Master's Degree in the fields of: “coach in athletics” and “physical education teacher”. Within the period 1994/2003 she worked as a teacher in physical education at the secondary school “Petar Beron” - Kostinbrod and as a methodologist in an applied-sciences laboratory and a teacher in "Theory and methodology of sports training" at the sports school “Georgi Benkovski”- Varna. Since 2003 and at present she worked as a senior teacher of physical education and sports, since 2007 she has been the Head of the Sports Sector at the Medical University of Varna. Since 2012 she is teaching Bulgarian folk dances at the Medical University - Varna. In 2018 Julieta Videnova received a Master of Public Health degree from the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”.

**General description of the dissertation:** The dissertation contains of 139 pages, structured in five main chapters, illustrated with 10 tables and 6 figures. The annexes are nine. The bibliographic reference includes 117 literary sources, of which 43 are in Cyrillic and 74 are in Latin.

**Relevance of the dissertation:** The topic of the dissertation "The influence of the Bulgarian Folk Dances on the Health of the Students from the Medical University of Varna" harmonizes with the PhD-candidate's profile as an athlete, teacher in physical education, sports and folk dances. Bulgarian Folk Dance (BgFD) combine physical activity, social interaction, creative and emotional expression. The dissertation focuses on the study of the impact of BgFD on health and their place in the academic training in line with the strategic goals formulated in the "National strategy for the development of physical education and sport in the Republic of Bulgaria 2012-2022", in part III.2.1. "Physical education and sports for schoolchildren and students".

**Chapter I. The Literature review** is written by Julieta Videnova on 38 pages (27% of the dissertation), structured in six sections: 1.1. History and importance of BgFD; 1.2. BgFD - classification and definitions; 1.3. Folklore regions in Bulgaria; 1.4. Attitudes, interests and motivation for practicing BgFD; 1.5. BgFD in the context of the health promotion concept. Basic concepts and definitions; 1.6. BgFD - culture, physical activity and a study discipline. The literature sources used (117, of which 43 are in Cyrillic and 74 in Latin) are sufficient in number, represent scientific publications of Bulgarian and foreign researchers and significant national and international documents cited earnestly. The review is written in clear and accurate language and reflects in-depth knowledge of the issues discussed and shows competences in handling the scientific terminology. The literary review presentation proofs the author's ability to analyse scientific information and supports the relevance of the dissertation topic and the methodology approach.

**Chapter II. Aim and objectives:** They are defined precisely on two pages of the dissertation. **The aim** is „to study the influence of BgFD on the health of the students from Medical University of Varna and the place of BgFD in the academic training“. The **research objectives** are presented in 6 clearly stated points, directly targetting the achievement of the goal. The driving hypothesis of the project is that BgFD are equivalent as physical activity to sports, with no higher levels of stress and with a good quality of life of the students who study BgFD.

**Chapter III. Material and Methods** are presented on 10 pages of the dissertation. They are clearly defined and adequate, according to the goal and the objectives, and are described in detail in **4 sections**: 1. Study design; 2. Quantitative methods, presented in 3 parts: sociological questionnaire; anthropometric measurements for reporting of the physical capacity levels; and statistical methods; 3. Qualitative methods; 4. Time frame and the survey setting. A study design, which applies a mixed-method approach in two phases, is presented: quantitative and qualitative. The design is described in detail, graphically illustrated extremely skillfully. The design includes the **first quantitative phase of the observational study**, in which the participants are divided into two main groups: dancing BgFD and non-dancing (sport volleyball or aerobics) in a compulsory elective discipline in physical education and sports classes at Medical university of Varna. The sample consists of 184 people: 92 studying BgFD and 92 studying sports, the formation of the sample is described in detail by a specific algorithm. **Quantitative methods** include 3 main groups: 1. sociological questionnaire method; 2. anthropometric studies; and 3. statistical methods of analysis. The **instruments** used in the sociological method of inquiry include **3 questionnaires** - one standardized for stress assessment and two questionnaires at the beginning and end of the study, designed for the aim and objectives of the dissertation. The questionnaires use

a modified Likert scale for the assessment of the attitudes and motivation for BgFD-studying; a subjective health assessment is carried out in a 5-point scale, as well as through a scale such as "thermometer" or "visual analogue scale". Anthropometric measurements are described in detail for 8 features (height; body weight; age in years; body mass index; dynamic flexibility; lower limb speed; upper limb speed; maximum upper limb force). Statistical methods are also presented in details: statistical grouping method; descriptive methods including point and interval estimates; graphical method. Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS v.23. **Qualitative methods** are described in detail for the **second phase** of the study. The steps for the inclusion of the participants in the **Delphi study** with the formation of **three panels** are presented: the expert panel with key specialists who are famous experts in the field of BgFD and choreography (4 people with attached CVs - Appendix 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d); an institutional panel of experts who design and approve the academic curricula (4 people); a teaching panel of specialists responsible for the implementation of student sports training programs at an academic level (4 people). The **instruments are two questionnaires**, respectively, for the first and second round in order to reach a consensus. Questionnaires are attached to the thesis. The mix-method approach applied in this dissertation allows achieving the aim and the set of objectives solving the research questions.

**Chapter IV. Results and discussion.** This part of the dissertation covers 31 pages, precisely arranged and illustrated, structured in three sections, sequentially for the phases of the study: quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis from the Delphi study and discussion of the results. The results sections and the discussion fully correspond to the tasks assigned in the dissertation. Each of the sections is extremely well structured, the results are presented in depth, discussed and summarized. The presentation of the results and their discussion reflect the ability of Julieta Videnova to handle the data from the research, to apply the appropriate methods of analysis and to interpret in depth. This part of the dissertation deserves special attention and appreciation for its adequate structuring, logical commitment and consistency.

**Chapter V. Conclusion, recommendation and contributions** - contains 9 pages of the dissertation. The findings are presented in two groups, respectively, in the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. They are well formulated and directly related to the research objective and objectives. As a result of the study and analysis of the data, Julieta Videnova presents **recommendations** in the context of health promotion context with an emphasis on **community action and the need for institutional support**. The proposed model for the study of BgFD is recommended for students from all over Bulgaria. The **contributions** are presented in two groups: **contributions of original nature and contributions of practical nature**. The contributions of the original character have been reduced to 3: 1. For the first time in Bulgaria, the concepts of "health promotion" "quality of life", "determinants of health", "community" are brought together in a study of BgFD; 2. For the first time in Bulgaria an analysis of the influence of BgFD on the health of students is made; 3. For the first time in Bulgaria, an audiovisual educational tool for the study of BgFD has been created, which is an innovative way of teaching healthy physical activity through BgFD. The applied contributions are presented in 3 points: 1. The application of mix-methods design is a modern approach with indisputable advantages; 2. The study provided a theoretical model for conducting a Delphi study that can be applied by experts when it

aims to reach consensus on various issues affecting community life. 3. An audiovisual teaching tool for the study of BgFD targeting student community has been created, incorporating key messages derived from the project. Thus, the conducted research and confirmed research hypothesis, guaranteed the "reserved" place of the BgFD in academic education.

In relation with the dissertation Julieta Videnova presents: **three full-text publications and two participations** in scientific forums.

**Dissertation, short version:** It is written in 48 pages, structured according to the requirements and reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation. The attached DVD-disc prepared as an additional applied contribution by the PhD candidate: "Instructions how to study Bulgarian Folk Dances" is a pleasant tool and an innovative teaching approach.

### CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific, theoretical, methodological and applied results, which make an original scientific contribution and **meet all the requirements** of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the implementation of the Law and the Rules of the Medical University of Varna. The submitted materials and dissertation results **fully comply** with the specific requirements, adopted in the Rules of the Medical University of Varna for the application of The Law. The dissertation shows that the PhD-candidate Julieta Videnova **possesses** deep theoretical knowledge and professional skills and **demonstrates** qualities for conducting independent research.

All of the above gives me reason to give a convinced **positive assessment** of the presented research in the reviewed dissertation, the short dissertation version and the achieved results and contributions.

**I suggest** to the respectful scientific jury to award the educational and scientific **PhD degree to senior teacher Julieta Georgieva Videnova** at the PhD program in the specialty „**Public health management**”, professional direction 7.4 „Public Health”, Field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sports.

18.11.2019  
Stara Zagora

Statement signed:   
Prof. Juliana Krumova Marinova, MD, PhD