

OPINION

from

Prof. Dr. Tatiana Simeonova Ivanova, PhD

of a dissertation on the topic:

**"COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE - DEVELOPMENT AND PLACE
IN BULGARIAN HEALTHCARE"**

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "PhD", Field of higher education: 7. Health and sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine, specialty "Social medicine and organization of health care and pharmacy".

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General situation

With order № P-109-566 from 01.12.2020 of the Rector of the Medical University - Varna I have been appointed a member of the Jury. At the first meeting of the Jury, according to Protocol №1 / 11.12.2020, I was elected to prepare an opinion on the procedure for acquiring ONS "PhD" by Dr. Iskra Staneva Kapincheva. In connection with this, with an official letter №109-15 / 12.01.2021. I have been officially provided with the necessary documents, in an appropriate form and scope for drawing up an opinion.

1. Relevance of the work

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) occupies an increasing place in the structure of services provided by health systems in the world, and this process is observed in Bulgaria. Addressing the problems of applying the methods and approaches of CAM, based on knowledge, skills, practices to improve public and individual health, is a particularly topical issue in terms of harmonization of approaches and their rational adoption, use and adaptation to conventional medicine.

2. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is written on 130 pages, including 2 tables and 14 figures. The bibliographic reference contains 232 literary sources, of which 97 in Cyrillic and 135 - foreign authors.

a. Review of the scientific literature

The overview is well structured and moves from the discussion of the concept of CAM to the types of CAM in Europe with clarification of the nature, historical development and their

current state. The main overview of the topic is presented on 26 standard typewritten pages, and in the process of presenting the goals, tasks, methods and discussion, the data are supplemented with interesting facts and explanations.

The considered literature served the author to outline the general approaches in the field of CAM and to analyze the type, volume and results of the conducted research in this field.

b. Purpose and tasks

The aim of the dissertation is correctly formulated and derives from the identified problems and data on the historical and scientific development of CAM, in order to determine its place in the Bulgarian health care, with emphasis on homeopathy as the most common method in Europe. To achieve this goal, Dr. Kapincheva has set 5 logically constructed tasks, and has selected a suitable design for their achievement.

c. Methods

The used methods include: historiographical method - historical-medical research of the CAM methods in Bulgaria through review of documents, normative base, publications and scientific researches in this field; SWOT analysis; quantitative and qualitative sociological methods - semi-structured interviews and standard statistical methods and graphical method for presenting the results of the research.

The target population for the study of the use of homeopathy in Bulgaria are patients with chronic complaints who have been treated homeopathically for a year or more (a total of 211 people), who are selected by clinics of homeopaths with over 20 years of experience, with a European diploma in homeopathy in the cities of Burgas, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo and Sofia, as well as parents who have chosen the homeopathic method for the treatment of their children.

d. Results and discussion

The study of the legal framework regarding the application of CAM in Bulgaria shows that the unconventional methods for beneficial effects on health are defined, as well as who can practice them, the way of their registration and the requirements for their activity (Health Act).

Through the attached SWOT-analysis, correct conclusions are made that CAM is present in the Bulgarian healthcare, but there is no complete idea of the proposed methods, performers and users. The external factors favoring and threatening the spread and integration of CAM with conventional medicine, grouped as global and national factors, have been studied. The unbiased research and determination of the strengths of CAM also makes a good impression, emphasizing the importance of a holistic and individual approach. Identifying the weaknesses of CAM outlines the platform and guidelines for improving the opportunities for CAM development by offering collaborative, communication and constructive strategies.

The established detailed data on the application of CAM in Bulgaria show the in-depth attitude and preparation of the doctoral student to the problems considered in the dissertation.

The research in the field of homeopathy, the obtained and analyzed results, prove the ability of the doctoral student to conduct an in-depth own research with appropriate methods and tools, incl. and the application of the standardized international questionnaire, Bulgarian version, with the addition of questions and on this basis to outline the country-specific profile of patients and their needs.

e. Conclusions

Dr. Kapincheva has formulated 4 conclusions in her dissertation, which adequately reflect the results obtained in the analyzed groups in terms of the necessary strategies for the development of CAM, the current situation and development of CAM - therapies, socio-demographic profile of patients treated with homeopathy, the level of awareness, and the reasons for choosing homeopathy in the treatment of children. As a result of the obtained data and the doctoral student's own experience, appropriate recommendations have been made, which can be fully accepted by the respective institutional levels regarding the national health policy, investment in research and last but not least - in education.

e. Contributions

The contributions are grouped into 5 points, of which 3 are original and 2 are practical. The main contributions are in the collected sufficient material to confirm the need for the development and integration of CAM with conventional medicine. The main contribution of practical and applied nature is the approbation of a combination of methods for research of CAM and a practical tool for research and monitoring of the quality of life.

To the contributions I would like to add the fact that for the first time we are presented a scientific study based on Commission Regulation (EU) N 912 / 2013 and the International Standard Classification - Areas of Education and Training 2013 in order to ensure international comparability of statistics for education. The adopted field of education is presented as an independent separate field, with code 0917 entitled "Traditional and complementary medicine and therapies".

3. Abstract and publications

The abstract is presented on 59 pages and fully reflects what is stated in the dissertation. Dr. I. Kapincheva has presented 3 full-text publications in prestigious journals, in 2 of which she is the first author and 3 participations in scientific and educational forums. The presented publications fully cover and exceed the minimum national requirements.

4. Conclusion

The dissertation of Dr. I. Kapincheva is the first in Bulgaria to treat in detail the problems of CAM and in particular, the application of homeopathic methods. It answers important questions about the need and importance of the use of CAM in the field of conventional medicine. It has all the necessary qualities to award the educational and scientific degree "PhD".

I am convinced of the positive assessment of the award of "PhD" to Dr. Iskra Staneva Kapincheva in the field of higher education: 7. Health and sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine, specialty "Social medicine and organization of health care and pharmacy".

09.02.2021

Prof. Dr. Tatiana Ivanova, PhD

