

OPINION

of Assoc. prof. **Gena Georgieva Penkova, PhD**

Department of Public Health Sciences, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University - Pleven

Subject: Dissertation of **Yana Toshkova Tosheva**, PhD student in a full-time form enrolled in the PhD programme "Health Care Management" for obtaining educational and science degree "PhD" in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sports", professional field 7.4. Public Health, Research in Health Care Management

By Order No P-109-486 / 18.11.2021 of Prof. Valentin Ignatov, MD, PhD - Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Parashkev Stoyanov" - Varna, based on a report having ref. No 102-2877/04.11.2021 of Prof. Silvia Borisova, PhD - Head of the Department of Health Care and Resolution of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Parashkev Stoyanov" - Varna under Protocol No 173 / 09.11.2021, I was elected a member of the Scientific Jury and at the first online meeting of the Scientific Jury (Protocol № 1/29.11.2021) in absentee I was appointed to prepare an **opinion** on the procedure for obtaining educational and science degree "PhD" in the scientific specialty "Health Care Management" with candidate **Yana Toshkova Tosheva**, PhD student in an independent form of education in the PhD programme "Health Care Management" to the Health Care Department at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov" - Varna, with a dissertation on "**Professional communication of public health inspector - opportunities for improvement.**"

Brief biographical and career development information about the PhD student

Yana Toshkova Tosheva was born on August 21, 1978 in the city of Varna. In 2000 she graduated from the Medical College - Varna obtaining degree "Specialist".

After her graduation she was working for a significant length of time in the state health control institutions in Varna: 2001-2004 - Sanitary Inspector at the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology; 2005-2011 - Junior Inspector at the Regional Inspectorate for Protection and Control of Public Health; 2011-2016 - Inspector at the District Directorate of Food Safety. During the summer semesters of 2015 and 2016, she was recruited as a lecturer in Practical Traineeship

on a part-time employment contract at the Medical College-Varna, Sector "Public Health Inspector".

In 2015 she acquired a Bachelor's degree in Health Care Management at the Faculty of Public Health of MU- Varna and in 2016 a Master's degree in the same specialty and professional qualification: Health Care Head and Lecturer in Practical Traineeship".

Since September 17, 2016, Yana Tosheva has been elected Assistant at the Medical College, Major "Public Health Inspector" and occupied this position until May 17, 2019. On July 16, 2018 she was enrolled in a regular PhD dissertation. on "**Professional communication of public health inspector - opportunities for improvement.**". Since the winter semester, 2020/2021 academic year she has been recruited again as a lecturer in Practical Traineeship on a part-time employment contract.

Her academic commitment as Assistant and Lecturer in Practical Traineeship is expressed in conducting seminars and traineeship in the subjects "Food Hygiene", "Communal Hygiene" and " Children and Adolescents Hygiene".

She was enrolled by Order № P-106-37 / 21.02.2018 in the specialty "Medical Pedagogy" within the postgraduate qualification and has 9 certificates of participation in various forms of continuing education and qualification.

She is a member of the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Public Health.

She commands basic level of English and Russian.

General characteristics of the dissertation and its relevance

The submitted work meets the requirements for formatting of a dissertation for awarding educational and science degree "PhD". The total pages of the work are 175 (129 pages of main text, 10 pages of bibliography, 30 pages of appendices and 6 pages of other text). The dissertation contains 11 tables, 62 figures and 6 appendices.

The main text is structured in five chapters: I. Literary review; II. Purpose, tasks and methodology; III. Results and discussion; IV. Approaches to improve the professional communication of the Public Health Inspector; V. Findings, recommendations, contributions and conclusion.

Relevance

Relevance of the dissertation. The PhD student has focused her scientific interest on professional communication, which is very relevant today due to its specific content and increased requirements for its applying by

specialists in the field of health control. The PhD student herself skillfully convinces us of this in the concise introduction to the dissertation.

Public health inspector's activity is highly specific. The exercising of legal powers and the status of public health inspectors (PHI) as civil servants creates opportunities for various interpersonal contacts and communication at various levels - with representatives of various social groups, governmental and non-governmental bodies, leaders, consumers, members of civil society. This requires good communication skills and formation of such abilities yet during their training and continuous development in the process of their implementation.

Evaluation of the dissertation structural elements

The literary review is 49 pages (28%) of the total volume of the dissertation). In a logical sequence, the PhD student examines the essence and the main characteristics of the communication process, its key elements in specific environment, the characteristics and peculiarities of the professional activity and the factors influencing the professional communication of the PHI.

The PhD professional experience in the practical institutions of health control contributes to the proper and in-depth analysis of the relevant regulatory documents and the development of the reform in these institutions. The survey is based on 178 sources, of which 126 are in Cyrillic (including 28 in Russian language) and 52 in Latin. However, some of the cited Internet sources do not comply with the requirements for formatting (author, title of publication, date of access to the site). In other sources there is no place, year of publication, etc. Most of the cited sources are published after 2010, but their exact share cannot be determined due to such inaccuracies and incompleteness.

The second section lays down the purpose, objectives and methodology of the study. The PhD student has formulated the exact purpose of the study: "To study the professional communication of PHIs in order to reveal opportunities to improve their communication skills in work processes." For its implementation, **5 specific tasks** are indicated, which detail the individual steps of the study. **4 working research hypotheses** have been formulated.

The organization of her own research is described briefly and clearly. The PhD student has been focused on various aspects of the researched problem: research of the opinion of the PHI on the professional communication in the working environment; identifying the factors influencing this process; survey of the opinion of experts in the field of health control on the activities of the PHIs and communication in a professional environment; presentation of the

professional-personal profile of the PHI and development of approaches for improvement of the professional communication of the PHI.

Empirical data were collected from studying of two groups of persons: **116 PHIs** working at the Regional Health Inspectorates (RHI) and **16 experts** from other public health institutions and heads of health institutions. A qualitative study was conducted with the experts in the form of an in-depth interview, which is undoubtedly a virtue of her work.

Data processing and analysis are carried out by appropriate descriptive, parametric and non-parametric statistical methods and appropriate software - IBM SPSS Statistics.

Chapter Three illustrates the results of the conducted surveys and the in-depth interview among the experts. All data is presented in a beautifully designed and easy-to-read graphic images and appropriate tables. The methods used for statistical processing are skillfully applied into the data analysis and elsewhere they are accompanied by the level of statistical significance. One of the advantages of her work is the SWOT analysis, outlining the strengths and weaknesses in the professional behavior of the PHI and the opportunities and threats (difficulties) to improve professional communication.

Without dwelling on specific figures and established dependencies, I would like to emphasize that I appreciate the structure, the content, the competent analysis of the data, the style of presentation used, the conclusions drawn in Chapter 3.

Chapter Four presents the practical and applied part of the dissertation through two extremely interesting models: 1. Model for improvement of professional communication and 2. Model for implementation of preventive measures.

The conclusions, recommendations and contributions presented in **Chapter Five** are derived from this study specific results. **Conclusions** are supported by accurate data for reliability and guarantee probability to confirm the formulated working hypotheses. **Recommendations** are convincing and feasible because they are referred to the relevant institutions - the training institutions and the institutions for subsequent implementation of the PHIs.

I fully accept the **contributions of theoretical and practical nature** indicated by the PhD student.

The dissertation abstract displays very well the content of the dissertation and presents in full the methodological approaches and results of the study. In connection with the dissertation, three publications are mentioned, in which the PhD student is the first author.

Conclusion

The presented dissertation work is very well written at a very high scientific level. The dissertation contains theoretical and practical contributions. Innovative approaches have been proposed to improve the process of professional communication of the public health inspector. The work proves good opportunities for the PhD student to conduct independent research work.

The dissertation "**Professional communication of public health inspector - opportunities for improvement**" fully meets the requirements of the Law for the development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation, as well as the Regulations for the Development of academic staff in MU - Varna.

I highly appreciate the dissertation and invite the honorable members of the Scientific Jury to vote positively for the award of educational and science degree "PhD" of the lecturer **Yana Toshkova Tosheva** in the scientific major "Health Care Management", Higher education area 7. "Healthcare and Sports", professional field 7.4. "Public Health".

Compiled by:



Assoc. prof. Gena Penkova (Grancharova), Ph.D

December 14, 2021