

OPINION

of

Prof. Silviya Borisova Dimitrova, PhD, DSc
Head of Department of Health Care
Faculty of Public Health
Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna

on the dissertation

"Professional communication of public health inspector - opportunities for improvement"

of Yana Toshkova Tosheva

for awarding of educational and science degree "PhD"

Field of higher education: 7. Health and Sports

Professional field: 7.4. Public Health

Specialty: "Health Care Management"

with supervisors:

Assoc. Prof. Stanislava Pavlova, Ph.D. and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tsvetelina Tarpomanova, Ph.D.

Details of the procedure

By order No P-109-431 of 16.07.2018 of the Rector of MU-Varna Yana Toshkova Tosheva was enrolled as PhD student in a regular form of education for obtaining educational and science degree "PhD" in the field of higher education: 7. Health and Sports, Professional field: 7.4. Public Health, specialty: "Health Care Management". A protocol for successfully passed PhD exam was presented. Given the Decision of the session of the Faculty Council of Faculty of Public Health under Protocol No 173 of 09.11.2021 for preparedness for public defense and proposal for Scientific Jury, Yana Toshkova Tosheva was approved for defense by Order No P-109-486 of 18.11.2021 of the Rector of MU-Varna.

Biographical data and career development

Yana Toshkova Tosheva graduated from the Medical College – Varna, specialty “Sanitary Inspector” in 2000. She acquired a bachelor's degree in Health Care Management in 2015 at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna and successfully graduated from the master's programme in the same specialty in 2016.

Her professional activity started in 2001 as Sanitary Inspector at the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology - Varna, then she worked as Junior Inspector at State Health control Directorate and later as Inspector at the Regional Inspectorate for Protection and Control of Public Health- Varna as Junior Inspector, and later as Inspector at the Regional Directorate of Food Safety - Varna. In the period 2019-2021, she works as Internal Auditor at the Student Hostels and Canteens to the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”

Yana Tosheva's professional development related to higher education began in 2015 as Lecturer on a part-time contract at the Public Health Inspector at the Medical College - Varna, and later on she held the position of Assistant in the same academic sector.

Descriptive characteristics of the dissertation

The dissertation written by Yana Tosheva consists of 175 pages, structured in compliance to the standard requirements, including: Introduction, Literary Review, Methodology and Organization of Research, Results and Discussions, Approaches to improve the professional communication of the public health inspector, Conclusions, recommendations and contributions. It is richly illustrated by 62 figures, 11 tables and 6 appendices. Bibliographic reference list includes 178 literature sources.

Relevance of the dissertation

The dissertation theme is contemporary and suitable. Professional communication is a key component of professional behavior being a set of actions based on professional knowledge, skills and judgement. The variety of activities of the public health inspector requires specific knowledge, skills and competencies in the field of professional interaction. Formation and use of communication skills and abilities is part of the key qualities of health professionals.

In modern medical practice, provision of promotional and preventive activities is increasingly establishing positive models for professional cooperation. The participation of the Public Health Inspector as a specialist performing specific activities focused on health promotion and disease prevention is characterized by a high frequency of interpersonal contacts in communication with different social groups and levels of education and awareness - leaders, colleagues, government and non-governmental services, consumers, their relatives, students and employees. The influence of the professional environment is dominant, that is an environment where person falls, interacts and influences the factors determining professionals' behaviour.

Literature Review

The author makes an analytical review of the literature, reviewing nature and main characteristics of communication in a professional environment. Characteristics and peculiarities of public health inspector professional activity are laid down in depth. Factors influencing professional communication of specialists in the practice are analyzed. The in-depth analysis of the areas and directions in the control activities of public health inspectors reasons the author to identify daily activities and roles requiring application of communication skills and competencies.

Training needs related to professional communication and formation of communication skills, which enable to achieve professional objectives through efficient presentation and exchange of information are outlined.

The logically structured Literature Review reveals the PhD student broad competences in the field of the issue under consideration.

Research Methodology

The main objective and tasks are specifically formulated and accurately reflect the research work carried out by Yana Tosheva. The author uses a wide range of methods adequate to achieve her objective. Structure and content of developed tools are subordinated to the specifics of the information gathered by the respective group of respondents. In order to study

the public health inspector professional communication, a model has been developed and approaches have been proposed for improving their communication skills in the process of work.

Documentary and sociological research methods were used - quantitative, qualitative and SWOT analysis. In order to reveal the nature of the reviewed scientific phenomena and their interdependencies, statistical methods for analysis and interpretation of data have been applied. The research instruments are self-developed and include an individual questionnaire card to survey the opinion of working public health inspectors and a questionnaire to conduct an in-depth interview. Conceptual apparatus and concepts adopted in the dissertation are presented.

Results and discussion

The dissertation presents results logically structured in two chapters - III and IV. Chapter III is devoted to the results of the research conducted on the public health inspector professional communication.

Specialists' opinion regarding job satisfaction, workload, self-assessment of their own communication skills and abilities, level of workload and frequency of conflicts, workplace relationships, as well as the factors affecting them has been studied.

Satisfaction with professional work has been researched through three categories of aspects related to nature of work, arising from the organizational environment and social relations in the workplace.

The data strongly confirms the need of applying the approaches developed by Yana Tosheva for improvement of communication skills in the process of work of public health inspectors. The proposed model for improving their professional communication includes a brief description of the approaches for optimizing professional communication and behavior in the activities of the public health inspector at an organizational level. The tools used are designated for inspectors' assessment and self-assessment to maintain professional communication and behavior and prevent stress.

Yana Tosheva discusses the obtained results and skillfully brings out as deficits in practice and outlines the need for applying a Model for improving professional communication with seven consecutive stages and a Model for public health inspectors training, by introducing specialized programs for communication skills and conflict resolution. These models are good practices in the light of the specifics of professional communication.

The information about the contributions presented in the dissertation objectively reflects actual achievements of Yana Tosheva. I fully accept the contributions in theoretical and practical aspect..

The eight main conclusions, clearly and precisely formulate, characterize in detail the results obtained from the implementation of the dissertation tasks and objectives. For the first time in our country the problem of professional communication in the practice of the public health inspector has been reviewed in details.

A comprehensive study of the training needs in the field of disease control and prevention has been conducted. The lack of a system for building professional communication

skills has been underlined. The role of the public health inspector in modern practice has been outlined.

The formulated recommendations and contributions of the dissertation are made on the basis of own data from the scientific research.

The dissertation is written in good academic style, precise in terminology.

In connection with the dissertation, the PhD student has presented three full-text publications in prestigious scientific journals.

The abstract faithfully reflects the dissertation contents.

Personal impressions


I know Yana Tosheva as motivated, successful and promising colleague from the Medical College - Varna. I highly appreciate her purposefulness, precision and responsibility. Yana Tosheva stands out with her exceptional loyalty, politeness in relationships and research.

Conclusion

The dissertation of Yana Toshkova Tosheva is of high scientific and practical value, which contributes to improving the professional communication of public health inspectors.

Based on the overall assessment of the file submitted to me, I believe that Yana Toshkova Tosheva fully meets the requirements of the Law for the development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University - Varna. I give my positive vote for awarding Yana Toshkova Tosheva the educational and science degree "PhD" in the specialty "Health Care Management".

21.12.2021
Varna

Opinion compiled by: 
Prof. Silviya Borisova, PhD, DSc