

STATAMENT

by **Assoc. Prof. Silvia Pavlova Nikolova, D.O.**

Department of Social Medicine and Healthcare Organization ,
Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna

member of **the Scientific Jury** , determined by Order No. R-109-371/ 04.11.2024 of Prof. Dr. Dimitar Raykov, MD - Rector of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna, according to the decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of "Public Health" under protocol No. 232 of 16.10.2024. and according to report with entry No. 102-2736/08.10.2024 by Assoc. Dr. Natalia Usheva, MD - Head of the Department of "Social Medicine and Health Care Organization".

Regarding : Procedure for acquiring a scientific degree "*Doctor of Sciences*" in the field of higher education: *7. Health care and sports* , professional direction: *7.4. Public Health* , major: *Public Health Management* .

Author of the dissertation : Assoc. Prof. Mihaela Atanasova Varneva.

Topic of the dissertation : "*Professional association and development of the activity of dental technicians in Bulgaria* " .

According to Protocol No. 1 of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury held on 11/12/2024. I am determined to prepare a statement. The statement was prepared on the basis of an analysis of the documents submitted by the candidate (described in the Application to the Rector of the Medical University - Varna) in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the implementation of the Law and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

Biographical data and career development of the candidate

Assoc. Prof. Michaela Varneva was born on November 16, 1963. in Varna. She graduated from the specialty "*Dental Technology* " in Varna in 1983. In 2010 obtained a master's degree in "*Sports Psychology* " at *Vasil Levski National Academy of Sciences* , and in 2013 obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the specialty "*Social Medicine and Organization of Health Care and Pharmacy* " with the topic "*Retrospection, analysis and socio-psychological problems in the preparation and realization of the "Professional Bachelor" in the specialty "Dental Technician"*". Since 2015 holds the academic position of "Associate Professor", Sector "Dental Technician" of the Medical College - Varna.

Assoc. Prof. Mihaela Varneva is the author of 1 monograph, 1 textbook chapter, 4 teaching materials, 100 scientific articles and 34 reports. Of the publications presented, 12 are related to the topic of the dissertation. Participation in two reports in a scientific forum abroad is evidence of the relevance and dissemination among the scientific community of results on the topic of the dissertation.

In 2017 was awarded the Diploma for outstanding services to the development of the Medical College - Varna, as well as the Certificate of Honor for contribution to the scientific activity of the Medical College - Varna. She is a member of a number of expert and working groups related to issues concerning the "Dental Technician" specialty.

Evaluation of the structure and content of the dissertation work and the dissertation abstract

The dissertation work of Assoc. Prof. Mihaela Atanasova Varneva on the topic "*Professional association and development of the activity of dental technicians in Bulgaria*" was presented for the acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences". The work is dedicated to an in-depth study of the professional association in dental practice and its role in the development of the profession and the improvement of the quality of health services in Bulgaria.

The dissertation is structured in four chapters and covers 239 pages. It is illustrated with 19 tables, 24 figures, 24 photographs, 4 diagrams and contains 9 appendices. The bibliographic reference includes 281 sources, of which 204 are in Cyrillic and 77 in Latin.

The topic of the dissertation work of Assoc. Prof. Mihaela Atanasova Varneva is extremely topical, as it examines important issues related to the professional association and development of dental technician activity in Bulgaria. The study combines many years of professional experience with innovative ideas for reforming the organization of the profession in the context of the growing requirements for the quality of health services. Based on the contemporary challenges in healthcare, the work offers solutions for optimizing the training and support of dental technicians, which is essential for improving the quality of services. This work represents a significant contribution to the future development of the dental technician profession and the provision of adequate conditions for professional advancement in Bulgaria.

The purpose of the dissertation, the ten tasks set, the hypotheses formulated and the tools used are correctly and clearly formulated and described. The dissertation has a well-founded and structured methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, providing a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the state of the dental profession and professional associations in Bulgaria. The main methods include documentary historiographic analysis, qualitative and quantitative analysis and comparative analysis of foreign experience in class organizations. In addition, nine in-depth interviews were conducted with dental practitioners, as well as surveys of 378 participants, including dental technicians and educators, providing a wide range of opinions and views on the issues covered. Based on these data, a SWOT analysis of the activity in the specialty "Dental Technician" was carried out, which assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the profession, as well as the opportunities and threats facing it.

The results and contributions of the scientific work of Assoc. Prof. Mihaela Atanasova Varneva make a distinctive impression with their depth and practical significance. Particularly valuable are the prepared historical periodization of the associations and professional organizations of dental technicians in Bulgaria, which was not available in the previous literature, as well as the conducted SWOT analysis of the activity in the specialty, which provides a detailed assessment of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the sector. With a practical purpose are those proposed and developed by the author: a model for the development of the activity and a strategy for the development of the profession, which can serve as a basis for improving the practices in dental technology and strengthening the class organization. In addition, the proposed Systematic Distance Learning (SDL) program on "Introduction to Scientific Research" aims to increase scientific activity among dental technicians by stimulating their participation in educational initiatives. Additionally valuable are the data established regarding dental technicians' willingness to train in a variety of areas, which provide a useful foundation for future educational programs and interventions. These results not only meet the current needs of the profession, but also offer innovative solutions for its modernization and adaptation to modern requirements.

The conclusions are clearly formulated and logically follow from the results obtained. They are grouped according to the research tasks set.

The recommendations made by the author will allow for the improvement of the activities of both the professional organization and the practitioners in the specialty and will contribute to the Medical College - Varna becoming a base for postgraduate/continuing training of dental technicians in practice.

The presented abstract, covering a total of 76 pages, corresponds to the content and structure of the dissertation work. It has all the necessary elements. It is meticulously prepared.

Assoc. Prof. Varneva has submitted the necessary documents required by the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its Implementation and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

My personal impressions of Assoc. Prof. Varneva is that she is extremely organized, hardworking and curious. She demonstrates a strong desire for self-improvement and constant acquisition of new knowledge, which makes her a motivated and dedicated professional.

Conclusion

After I am familiar with the content of the dissertation work, the scientific publications related to the topic of the dissertation, the originality of the contributions received, as well as the fact that the candidate meets the minimum scientometric indicators laid down in the Regulations for the Application of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria, I give a POSITIVE ASSESSMENT regarding the awarding of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" to Assoc. Prof. Mihaela Atanasova Varneva. The work is extremely valuable for the development of the dental profession in Bulgaria and provides innovative ideas and solutions that will have a long-term positive impact on professional practice and education in the sector.

12/12/2024

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Varna

Member of the Scientific Jury:

/ Assoc. Prof. Silviya Nikolova /

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§1, б. „Б“ от Регламент (ЕС)
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