

STATEMENT

by assoc. prof. Zhivko Pavlinov Apostolov, PhD, MD,
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Pursuant to Order No. R-109-401/30.09.2025 of the Rector of Medical University – Varna, and based on Article 24, paragraph 6 and Article 30, paragraph 3 of the Regulations for the Application of the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria (PPLASRBG), Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at Medical University – Varna, the decision under Protocol No. 46/29.09.2025 of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine, and Protocol No. 1/02.10.2025 of the Scientific Jury meeting.

Regarding

The Doctoral Thesis for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Dr. Aleksandra Borislavova Stavreva, on the topic: "Analysis and Assessment of Psychological Factors in Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease in Pre-Dialysis and Dialysis Stages," with Scientific Supervisor Prof. Dr. Svetla Vasileva Staykova, D.M.Sc.

The presented set of materials is in compliance with the aforementioned law and regulations and includes all necessary documents.

Biographical Data

Dr. Aleksandra Stavreva was born in Varna in 1995. In 2014, she graduated with honors from First Language High School, Varna, specializing in German and English. In 2020, she graduated from "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" Medical University – Varna, with a major in Medicine. Starting August 2021, she began working as a physician at the Clinic of Nephrology and Hemodialysis, "St. Marina" University Hospital, Varna. In September 2021, she was appointed as an honorary assistant professor at the Sector of Nephrology, Hemodialysis, and Toxicology at the Second Department of Internal Diseases, and since November 2022, she has been a full-time assistant professor. She was enrolled as a PhD student in the department in December 2021. She is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Association (BMA) and the Bulgarian Society of Nephrology.

The candidate maintains active scientific profiles on: ORCID, Google Scholar.

Assessment of the Topic's Relevance

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) represents a global health problem with rising incidence and high mortality. Against the background of severe physical symptoms, the high comorbidity with mental disorders—depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and impaired quality of life—is often neglected. These factors directly affect adherence to treatment (compliance), prognosis, and life expectancy. The study of these psychological factors is a critically relevant issue, as their early diagnosis and adequate treatment can improve both the mental state and the somatic outcomes in patients with CKD.

The results of such a study have direct practical applicability. They can serve as an empirical basis for integrating routine psychological screening into Nephrology Departments and Dialysis Centers in Bulgaria. The doctoral thesis provides a bridge between Nephrology,

Medical Psychology, and Psychiatry, contributing to improving the quality of the multidisciplinary team approach in the care of CKD patients.

Structure of the Doctoral Thesis

The doctoral thesis is written on 122 standard pages and is illustrated with 10 figures and 15 tables. The literature review covers 213 sources. The introduction is brief, clear, and outlines the main themes of the thesis. The literature review is detailed and skillfully presented. The candidate's in-depth knowledge of the problem is evident. The objectives of the doctoral research, as well as the tasks for achieving them, are clearly and consistently formulated. The study design and the statistical methods used are aligned with the set objectives. The sample size allows for reliable statistical analysis. The results are presented systematically and adequately illustrated. The discussion critically presents the rationale for the obtained results in light of the candidate's own work and the world literature.

Analysis of Conclusions and Contributions

There is full correspondence between the set objectives, the formulated tasks, and the presented conclusions. I accept the established contributions as original, reliable, and possessing high applied value. The PhD student presents 4 articles in Bulgarian, based on the doctoral thesis. The presented abstract (54 pages) contains the main chapters of the doctoral thesis and meets the formatting requirements.

Critical Notes and Recommendations for the Doctoral Thesis

No significant weaknesses or ambiguities can be pointed out; all requirements for preparing the doctoral thesis have been met.

Conclusion

The doctoral thesis is the candidate's own research and contains scientific, scientific-applied, and applied results that represent an original contribution to science and comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Application of ZRASRB, and the Regulations of MU-Varna. The presented materials and doctoral results fully correspond to the specific requirements adopted in connection with the Regulations of MU-Varna for the application of ZRASRB. Through the presented doctoral thesis, Dr. Aleksandra Stavreva demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the subject, as well as the ability to form logical hypotheses, conduct independent scientific research using contemporary methodology, and analyze and discuss its results. For the above reasons, I confidently give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the doctoral thesis, abstract, achieved results, and contributions reviewed above, and I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Dr. Aleksandra Borislavova Stavreva in the doctoral program in Nephrology.

Date: 27 Dec 2025
Varna

Prepared the st:
/assoc. prof. Zhivko Pavlir

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