

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Vanya Bancheva Slavova, MD, PhD

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Member of scientific jury appointed by Order No. P-109-314/ 21.07.2025 by the Rector of
Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna

Concerning: Open procedure for conferral of the PhD educational and scientific degree in PhD
programme "Disaster Medicine", professional field 7.1. Medicine, field of higher education 7.
Health care and Sport.

Author of the PhD thesis: Dr. Yassen Yonkov Georgiev

Department: Department of Disaster Medicine and Maritime Medicine,
Faculty of public health, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna

Thesis title: "Preparedness of healthcare facilities in emergency response to natural and
anthropogenic disasters in Varna region of Bulgaria"

Form of doctoral studies: Full-time form of education

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Krasimir Borisov Gigov, MD, PhD

Assoc. Prof. Nikolina Radkova Radeva, PhD

1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student

This opinion is provided in my capacity as a member of the Scientific Jury, according
to Order P-109-314/ 21.07.2025 by the Rector of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev
Stoyanov" – Varna. The set of materials presented in both paper/electronic form complies with
the Law on development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its
implementation and the Rules for development of the academic staff at Medical University
"Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna. The set includes the required documents and confirms
the legality of the procedure.

Biographical details and career profile of the PhD student

Dr. Yassen Yonkov Georgiev was born on May 9, 1994, in Varna. He graduated from
the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna in 2019 and obtained a Master's
degree in Medicine.

Dr. Yasen Yonkov Georgiev began his professional and academic career in 2020 as an assistant and postgraduate trainee at the Department of Disaster Medicine and Maritime Medicine, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – Varna.

By Order No. R-109-505/04.11.2020 of the Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna, he was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the PhD program "Disaster Medicine," professional field 7.1. Medicine, area of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports. After successfully completing his Individual Study Plan, he was discharged with the right to defend his dissertation by Protocol No. 111/08.07.2025 from a meeting of the Department Council of the Department of Disaster Medicine and Maritime Medicine, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – Varna.

Dr. Georgiev has 5 years of teaching experience at the Department of Disaster Medicine and Maritime Medicine, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna, where he conducts classes in the elective courses: First Aid at Home and in the Office and Maritime Incidents.

Dr. Georgiev has participated in numerous courses and training programs aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills in the field of Disaster and Emergency Medicine. He is a member of national scientific and professional organizations: Bulgarian Medical Association (BMA), Bulgarian Scientific Society for Public Health (BSSPH).

2. Current relevance of the topic of the PhD thesis

The dissertation submitted for my opinion addresses the investigation of the preparedness of healthcare facilities in emergency response to natural and anthropogenic disasters in Varna region of Bulgaria. Healthcare facilities are the primary providers of health services to the population and play a key role in the organization of medical support during disaster situations. Natural and anthropogenic disasters pose a significant risk to all healthcare structures within the affected area. Healthcare facilities face serious challenges that disrupt their proper functioning and their ability to provide health services to the community. Damage to hospital infrastructure, the significant increase in the need for health services, and shortages of healthcare resources – both human and material – lead to an increased risk for patients, staff, and visitors. Overcoming these challenges requires targeted actions to enhance the preparedness of healthcare facilities for protection and response in the event of risks from natural and anthropogenic disasters. The preparedness of healthcare facilities is a key element in the organization and management of medical support for the population during disasters, ensuring the provision of timely and effective medical care and treatment until the outcome for the affected individuals.

In this regard, Dr. Georgiev's selected dissertation topic addresses relevant issues both in scientific and practical terms.

3. Awareness and Understanding of the Research Subject

The presented dissertation, as well as the related scientific publications, demonstrates a deep understanding of the issues discussed in various aspects. The seven separate parts of the literature review, along with a thorough bibliographic reference, indicate the strong theoretical preparation of the doctoral candidate.

The aim of the dissertation is to examine the preparedness of healthcare facilities in Varna District for protection and response in the event of risks from natural and anthropogenic hazards and to propose measures to enhance their resilience and reduce the risk. In direct relation to the aim, five clearly defined objectives, one main thesis, and five research hypotheses have been set. The methodological approaches and stages of the conducted investigations are described in detail and in the required sequence.

4. Research methodology

The study is based on a qualitative research design, incorporating the collection, processing, and analysis of non-numerical data with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the practices, experiences, and perceptions of key stakeholders regarding the disaster preparedness and response capacity of hospital healthcare facilities. The object of the study comprises hospital healthcare facilities, given their critical role within the broader framework of disaster risk reduction and capacity building for the protection of the population.

To achieve the stated aim and objectives, a comprehensive methodological approach was applied, utilizing the following methods: documentary method, qualitative and quantitative sociological methods /in-depth interview/. Three in-depth interviews were conducted using a set of 22 pre-prepared questions regarding the preparedness for protection and response of the selected healthcare facilities in Varna District in the event of risks from natural and anthropogenic hazards. The questionnaire was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) with Protocol No. 134 dated 20.06.2023. The questions are aimed at eliciting the personal opinions and positions of the interviewees and were developed based on a World Health Organization document (Hospital Emergency Response Checklist: An All-Hazards Tool for Hospital Administrators and Emergency Managers), designed to reduce disaster risk for healthcare facilities and to build effective protection capacity. The study was conducted personally, with each interview lasting 60 minutes per respondent. In the data processing and implementation of the qualitative research, were used exploratory methods and software tools – Excel 2022 and MaxQDA.

5. Characteristics and Evaluation of the PhD thesis

Dr. Yassen Georgiev's dissertation consists of 150 pages. The content is structured according to the accepted requirements and includes: introduction (2 pages), literature review (39 pages), aims and tasks (1 page), materials and methods (7 pages), results and discussion (60 pages), conclusions (2 pages), contributions (2 page), and bibliography (30 pages). The dissertation is illustrated with 18 tables, 4 figures, 2 charts, and 5 appendices.

The literature review is in-depth and comprehensive, providing a detailed account of the current state of the issues discussed in the dissertation.

The aim of the dissertation is clearly defined. The set objectives are well formulated in accordance with the dissertation topic and the presented literature review. The main thesis and the research hypotheses developed in its support are consistent with the aim and objectives of the dissertation. The materials and methods used are described in detail.

The results of the candidate's own research are thematically structured according to the set tasks and are well-illustrated. A detailed presentation is provided on: the natural and anthropogenic hazards in the Republic of Bulgaria, the natural and anthropogenic hazards in Varna and the Varna District, the condition of the healthcare infrastructure in the city of Varna and the Varna District, and the results of the in-depth interviews concerning:

- Preparedness of healthcare facilities providing hospital care in Varna and the Varna District for protection and response in the event of natural and anthropogenic disasters;
- Assessment of the capacity of hospitals in Varna and the Varna District for reducing the risk of natural and anthropogenic hazards;
- Measures to enhance preparedness for protection and for effective and timely response of healthcare facilities providing hospital care in the Varna District during disasters.

The obtained results are thoroughly and comprehensively discussed.

The conclusions are well-organized, logically formulated, and adequately summarize the results. They highlight the need to enhance the capacity of healthcare facilities providing hospital care to respond to natural and anthropogenic hazards, with an emphasis on resource optimization, staff training, and coordination with external services and partners.

Eleven well-formulated contributions of both scientific-theoretical and practical-applied significance are presented.

The bibliography includes 156 sources, of which 12 are in Cyrillic and 144 in Latin script.

6. Publications related to the PhD thesis

In connection with the dissertation, three full-text scientific publications have been presented, two of which list Dr. Yassen Georgiev as the first author.

7. Self-presentation

The self-presentation is presented in 51 pages, contains the essential points of the full dissertation, and complies with the established requirements for its preparation.

8. Critical Remarks: I have no critical remarks on the content.

CONCLUSION

Based on the overall analysis and evaluation of the provided documentation for Dr. Yassen Yonkov Georgiev's professional and scientific development, and after a complete review of her PhD thesis titled "Preparedness of healthcare facilities in emergency response to natural and anthropogenic disasters in Varna region of Bulgaria", I consider that it contains original results and meets all the requirements of the Law on development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its implementation and the Rules for development of the academic staff at Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

The PhD thesis demonstrates that the PhD student possesses deep theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty "Disaster Medicine" and shows the qualities and abilities necessary for conducting independent scientific research.

Based on the above, I confidently give a **positive evaluation** of the presented PhD thesis and recommend that the esteemed scientific jury award the **educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR" to Dr. Yassen Yonkov Georgiev** for the doctoral program "Disaster Medicine", professional field 7.1. Medicine, field of higher education 7. Health care and Sport.

Date: 14.09.2025

Stara Zagora

Signature:

/Assoc. Prof. Vanya Slavova, MD, PhD/

Заличено на основание чл. 5,
§1, б. „Б“ от Регламент (ЕС)
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