

TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY,  
APPOINTED WITH ORDER № P-109-189/ 19.05.2026  
OF THE RECTOR OF THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY  
“PROF. DR. P. STOYANOV”- VARNA

## OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Antonia Yordanova Atanassova, MD, PhD, D.Sc.  
Internal member of MU–Varna, habilitated in professional field  
7.1 Medicine Medical University – Varna

regarding the dissertation thesis entitled **“Risk Factors and Clinical Follow-up in Patients with Upper Gastrointestinal Bleeding”** submitted for the procedure for acquiring the educational and scientific degree **“Doctor”** in the full-time doctoral program

**“Gastroenterology”**, professional field 7.1 Medicine

Author: Dr. Aleksandar Valeriev Yordanov PhD student, Faculty of Medicine, MU–Varna

### I. Procedure of the Defense

By Order No. R-109-189/19.05.2026 of the Rector of the Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna, issued on the basis of a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine (Protocol No. 1/01.06.2026), and pursuant to Art. 24, para. 6 and Art. 30, para. 3 of the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at MU–Varna, I was appointed to prepare a statement on the dissertation thesis of Dr. Aleksandar Valeriev Yordanov entitled: **“Risk Factors and Clinical Follow-up in Patients with Upper Gastrointestinal Bleeding”**, submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree **“Doctor”** in the doctoral program **“Gastroenterology”**, within the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine.

Dr. Aleksandar Yordanov is a full-time doctoral student at the Second Department of Internal Medicine, Training Sector of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition.

The submitted documentation complies with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the Medical University of Varna. No procedural violations have been found. This statement has been prepared in accordance with the established requirements for issuing statements for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree **“Doctor”**.

I declare that I have no conflict of interest within the meaning of Article 4, paragraph 5 of the LDASRB

### II. BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Aleksandar Yordanov completed his secondary education in 2013 at the German Language School “Friedrich Schiller”, Leistungsklasse. In 2020, he was awarded the Master’s degree in Medicine from the Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna, graduating with an excellent overall grade (6.00) from all examinations, an excellent grade (6.00) from the state examinations, and receiving the distinction **“Golden Hippocrates”** for outstanding academic performance.

Even prior to the formal conferral of his medical degree, he commenced voluntary clinical work at the Clinic of Gastroenterology, Dietetics and Nutrition. Since December 2020, he has held

the academic position of Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Gastroenterology, Training Sector of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition. In 2025, he successfully obtained his medical specialty in **Gastroenterology**. Additionally, Dr. Yordanov completed a clinical internship in Internal Medicine at the North-Western State Medical University named after I.I. Mechnikov in Saint Petersburg.

The doctoral candidate has undertaken extensive postgraduate training in advanced endoscopic techniques, including participation in the following specialized courses:

- **ESGE Endoscopy Camp**, Zagreb, Croatia (2024)
- **ESD Phase of ENDO Bulvision**, ROEYA Training Center (2024)
- **EUS Phase of ENDO Bulvision**, ROEYA Training Center (2025)
- **AEM – Advanced Endoscopy Masterclass**, ERCP and EUS (FNA/FNB) Hands-on Training, Valletta, Malta (2026)
- **ESGE Endoscopy Camp – Advanced Course**, Munich, Germany (2026)

Dr. Yordanov demonstrates excellent digital competencies and is fluent in both German and English. He is an active member of several professional organizations, including:

- the Bulgarian Medical Association
- the Society of Young Gastroenterologists
- the Bulgarian Society of Gastroenterology, Gastrointestinal Endoscopy and Abdominal Ultrasound

### **III. Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation comprises **231 pages** and is illustrated with **76 figures** and **149 tables**. The bibliography includes **266 references**, all in English. The clinical study was conducted with the approval of the **Research Ethics Committee of the Medical University – Varna** (Protocol/Decision No. 10, meeting held on **27 February 2025**).

Due to the retrospective design of the study, the absence of direct contact with patients, and the exclusive use of existing medical documentation, **individual informed consent was not required**.

### **IV. Relevance and Significance of the Dissertation**

The topic of the dissertation is of exceptionally high contemporary relevance. The incidence of hospitalizations due to acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding remains markedly elevated, ranging between **50 and 160 per 100,000 population**, while the costs associated with diagnostic evaluation and therapeutic management continue to be substantial despite significant advances in therapeutic modalities and endoscopic techniques. Reported in-hospital mortality rates vary across studies, typically between **2% and 10%**, and may reach **5% to 14%** in certain cohorts.

Several key aspects of clinical management remain subjects of ongoing debate, including:

- the stratification of risk factors;
- the identification of patients requiring urgent blood transfusion;
- the optimal timing for emergency endoscopic intervention;
- the appropriate management of patients receiving anticoagulant or antiplatelet therapy;
- and the selection of the most effective endoscopic hemostatic techniques for specific clinical scenarios.

The dissertation of Dr. Aleksandar Yordanov provides a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of these issues, integrating the most up-to-date therapeutic approaches with a detailed evaluation of risk factors and prognostic determinants in patients presenting with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding. The work offers valuable insights that contribute meaningfully to current clinical practice and the broader scientific discourse in the field.

## V. Essence of the Dissertation

The aim of the dissertation is clearly and appropriately defined: to analyze the clinical, laboratory, endoscopic and therapeutic characteristics of patients presenting with acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding, to identify the risk factors associated with severe disease course, recurrence and adverse outcomes, and simultaneously to optimize the diagnostic–therapeutic approach and clinical follow-up. The seven research tasks are well structured and logically systematized, and the conclusions are fully aligned with these tasks, convincingly demonstrating that the overarching aim of the study has been achieved. Dr. Aleksandar Yordanov establishes that patients at increased risk of unfavorable in-hospital outcomes in the context of acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding are predominantly those of advanced age, with a substantial comorbidity burden and clinical indicators of hemodynamic instability. The severity of non-variceal bleeding is shown to depend on the complex interplay between the endoscopic severity of the lesion, laboratory abnormalities and comorbid conditions, each of which possesses independent prognostic value. The author emphasizes that no universal scoring system exists that can reliably predict all clinically relevant outcomes, and comparative assessment of established scoring systems reveals substantial differences in their ability to predict rebleeding, mortality and the need for intervention. Dr. Yordanov demonstrates that the shock index is a key independent predictor of recurrent bleeding, while in-hospital mortality is determined by the multifactorial interaction of hemodynamic instability, severity of blood loss, presence of organ dysfunction, adverse endoscopic findings and recurrence of bleeding. A major scientific and applied contribution of the dissertation is the first comprehensive evaluation in Bulgaria of the prognostic performance of the Glasgow–Blatchford Score, AIMS65, ABC, CANUKA, MAP, the pre-endoscopic and full Rockall Score, PNED and CSMCPI in relation to in-hospital mortality, rebleeding and the need for intervention. For the first time in Bulgarian clinical practice, a detailed comparative analysis of these prognostic systems has been conducted under real-world hospital conditions, outlining their respective strengths, limitations and applicability to clinical decision-making.

## VI. Publications and Scientific Activity

The dissertation of Dr. Aleksandar Yordanov incorporates five scientific publications directly related to the topic of the thesis, all published in journals of the Medical University of Varna, two in English and three in Bulgarian, with the doctoral candidate being the first and sole author of each. In addition, he has delivered two oral presentations—one in English and one in Bulgarian—at a scientific forum with international participation organized by the Society of Internists “Club of Interests” under the Union of Scientists, Varna branch. The dissertation fully meets the structural and substantive requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”.

**VII. Conclusion** On the basis of the presented scientific contributions, the methodological soundness of the research and the demonstrated academic maturity of the doctoral candidate, I am firmly convinced in casting a **positive vote** and I hereby propose that the members of the Scientific Jury at the Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna also vote in favour of awarding Dr. Aleksandar Yordanov the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the doctoral programme “Gastroenterology”.

07 June 2026, Varna

Заличено на основание чл. 5,  
§1, б. „В“ от Регламент (ЕС)  
2016/679

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