

To
the Chairman of the Scientific Jury
appointed by Order No. R -109-42/16. 01.2026
of the Rector of MU-Varna

OPINION

from Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Veselinova Gorcheva, MD,
Clinic of Internal Medicine, University Hospital "Sveta Marina" Pleven
Department of Nephrology, Hematology and Gastroenterology
Faculty of Medicine
Medical University of Pleven

Subject: Dissertation on the topic:

“The role of endoscopy in assessing response

after neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy for rectal cancer” for the acquisition
of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty
"Gastroenterology"

Author: Dr. Aleksandar Dimitrov Trifonov

Department: Second Department of Internal Medicine, Section
"Gastroenterology", Faculty of Medicine, Medical University "Prof. Dr.
Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna

Scientific supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Aleksandar Kamenov Zlatarov, MD, PhD

Topic relevance:

The dissertation submitted to me for opinion for the award of the educational
and scientific degree "Doctor" on the topic: **"The role of endoscopy in
assessing response after neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy for rectal cancer"**

corresponds to the field of study in which it is defended: professional field 7.1. Medicine, doctoral program "Gastroenterology".

The dissertation represents an in-depth analysis of a current and debatable topic in gastroenterology. For the first time in Bulgaria, a systematic analysis of endoscopically determined clinical response (complete, near complete, and incomplete) after neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy in locally advanced rectal cancer in real clinical conditions was performed.

A parallel assessment of imaging, histological and laboratory parameters was performed

The problem presented in the dissertation corresponds to modern trends regarding the role of endoscopic examination in the course of treatment, within the framework of the multidisciplinary algorithm.

Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation work:

The dissertation consists of 139 standard pages and contains all required sections, distributed in an optimal ratio in terms of volume, illustrated with 22 figures and 32 tables. The bibliography contains 113 titles, of which 4 are by Bulgarian authors and 109 are in Latin. One publication related to the dissertation is presented.

The presented dissertation is in accordance with the requirements of MU-Varna for structuring and volume content. Its structure includes 10 chapters: Introduction - 1 page, Literature review - 54 pages, Aim and objectives - 1 page; Materials and methods - 13 pages, Results - 27 pages, Discussion – 10 pages; Summary - 10 pages, Conclusions - 1 page, Final Conclusions – 2 pages; Contributions - 2 pages.

The introduction is clearly formulated. The literature review is detailed, up-to-date, and logically leads to the goals and objectives. The volume is sufficient and demonstrates the doctoral student's in-depth and critical knowledge of the topic.

The goal of the scientific work is precisely defined and based on the conclusions of the literature review. 6 tasks have been formulated that meet the set goal and shape the stages of implementation of the scientific work.

The “Materials and Methods” section is detailed and well structured. The selection criteria for the study groups are clearly defined. Adequate statistical

methods were used to process and analyze the collected information. The selected, presented and applied methodological approaches allowed the doctoral student to fulfill the research tasks and achieve the set goal.

The results follow the previously set tasks. They are clear, informative and illustrated with tables and figures. Modern statistical methods have been applied.

The discussion of the obtained data is based not only on the own results, but also on a large number of studies correctly cited in the literature. The conclusions are clearly formulated and reflect the analysis of the results, as well as the set goals and objectives.

I accept the contributions of the dissertation work as scientifically and scientifically applied.

Abstract

The abstract meets the requirements in terms of both content and layout. It correctly reflects the essence of the dissertation work. It is illustrated with highly informative figures and tables.

Assessment of dissertation publications

In connection with the dissertation work, Dr. Aleksandar Dimitrov Trifonov presents 1 full-text publication, published in refereed and indexed scientific journals, thereby meeting the requirements of the Medical University - VARNA for acquiring the ONS "doctor".

CONCLUSION

The dissertation work of Dr. Aleksandar Dimitrov Trifonov on the topic "**The role of endoscopy in assessing response after neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy for rectal cancer**" is an original and up-to-date scientific work **that meets all the requirements of the Law** on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LAADRБ), the Regulations for the Implementation of LAADRБ and the relevant Regulations of MU - VARNA. The presented materials and dissertation results correspond to the specific requirements of the higher education institution.

The dissertation shows that the doctoral student Dr. Trifonov has mastered methodologies, is able to analyze, synthesize results and formulate conclusions, and has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills.

Due to the above, I give my positive assessment of the dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Dr. Aleksandar Dimitrov Trifonov.

18.03.2026

City of Pleven

Prepared the opinion:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zornitsa Veselinova Gorcheva, MD

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