

OPINION

by

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on: Dissertation submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree **“Doctor”**; Higher Education Field 7. Healthcare and Sport, Professional Field 7.1 Medicine, Scientific Specialty **“General Medicine”**, by **Eva Hristova Ivanova, MD**

on the topic **“Homeopathy in General Medical Practice”**

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. Valentina Hristova Madzhova, MD, PhD

By decision of the Chair of the Scientific Jury and in accordance with Order of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna No. R-109-245 of 09.07.2026, I have been appointed to present an opinion on the dissertation of Dr. Eva Hristova Ivanova on the topic **“Homeopathy in General Medical Practice”** in the scientific specialty **“General Medicine”**

This opinion has been prepared and is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB) and its Implementing Regulations.

Brief biographical data of the doctoral candidate.

Dr. Eva Hristova Ivanova graduated with a Master's degree in Medicine from the Medical University of Varna in 1997. In 2004 she obtained a Master's degree in Kinesitherapy and completed the Master's program in Homeopathic Therapy at the National Sports Academy **“Vasil Levski,”** Sofia.

In 2009 she obtained a Master's degree in Public Administration, specializing in **“Management of European Public Projects,”** at Varna Free University **“Chernorizets Hrabar”** – Varna. In 2007 she acquired the specialty of **“General Medicine.”**

The doctoral candidate began her professional career in 1997 at the Municipal Hospital in Devnya as a doctor assistant, and from 1998 worked as a resident physician at the Municipal Hospital in Veliki Preslav. Between 1999 and 2000 she worked as a homeopathic physician

and lecturer in homeopathy at the “Anhira” Holistic Center in Sofia, after which she established her own practice as a homeopathic physician in Varna. Between September 2009 and February 2010 she worked as an assistant in hygiene, engaged under a civil-law contract at the Department of Preclinical and Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy, Medical University of Varna. From 2010 to 2016 she was an assistant in hygiene and medical ecology at the same department. Since 2016 to the present she has been the manager and homeopathic physician at the “Dr. Eva Hristova Health Center.” Since 2016 to the present she has also served as an assistant at the Department of General Medicine of the Medical University of Varna.

Significance and topicality of the research topic: The dissertation of Dr. Eva Hristova Ivanova addresses a topical and important practical problem of interdisciplinary significance. General medical practice is the main form of primary health care within the Bulgarian healthcare system. Over the past decades, interest in alternative treatment methods has been growing among both patients and a segment of medical professionals. Homeopathy is among the most widely used complementary methods in a number of European countries and worldwide, being applied predominantly in primary health care. Homeopathic treatment is used either as an alternative to conventional treatment or as a complement to it. The available scientific literature still contains few studies on attitudes, degree of awareness, and motivation for using or rejecting homeopathy, as well as its influence on trust in the physician–patient relationship within the context of general medical practice in Bulgaria. This renders the dissertation of Dr. Eva Hristova Ivanova highly topical.

Volume and structure: The dissertation of Dr. Eva Hristova Ivanova comprises 231 standard pages, illustrated with 8 figures, 30 tables, and 3 appendices. The bibliography includes 269 literature sources, of which 9 are in Cyrillic and 260 in Latin script. It concludes with findings that support the need for research on the dissertation topic. The subject matter and content of the work are suitable for a doctoral dissertation and are of interest not only to specialists in General Medicine but also to a wider range of professionals.

The literature review systematically examines the place of homeopathy among traditional treatment methods, its historical development, regulation, and its integration into public healthcare systems and general medical practice.

Research methodology: The aim of the study is to investigate, analyze, and evaluate the attitudes of general practitioners (GPs), medical students, medical interns, and patients

regarding the application of homeopathy as a therapeutic and preventive method in general medical practice.

To achieve this aim, the doctoral candidate has defined 5 main objectives:

1. To investigate the interest in, and attitude toward, homeopathy as a complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) method among GPs, medical students, medical interns, and patients.
2. To investigate the extent of the application of homeopathy by GPs.
3. To establish the reasons for the use or rejection of homeopathy among GPs, medical students, medical interns, and patients.
4. To investigate the level of knowledge of, and willingness to be trained in, homeopathy among GPs, medical students, and medical interns.
5. To investigate and evaluate the degree of trust in the physician–patient relationship with regard to the use of homeopathy as one of the CAM methods.

The results obtained are presented in text form and through 30 tables, 8 figures, and 3 appendices. The statistical processing applied is adequate. The discussion is thorough and well systematized, comparing the author's own results with Bulgarian and international data. It is precisely in this chapter that Dr. Hristova's sound expertise, rich clinical experience, and capacity for critical analysis of the results obtained become evident. The results presented are fully sufficient for the fulfillment of the stated objectives.

The conclusions number 8 in total and follow logically from the results obtained. They are well formulated, clear, and precise.

The contributions presented number 16 in total and are divided into three groups:

Contributions of an original character

1. The first large-scale study conducted in Bulgaria to analyze and evaluate attitudes regarding the application of homeopathy as a therapeutic and preventive method in general medical practice.
2. The first comparative study in Bulgaria covering general practitioners, patients, and the upcoming generation of physicians entering the healthcare system – final-year medical trainees and medical students.

3. For the first time, medical students have been studied simultaneously in their roles as future physicians and current users of homeopathy, tracking the dynamics of attitudes as medical education progresses.
4. It has been established that the motives for seeking and using homeopathy differ qualitatively among patients, GPs, and medical students.
5. For a more complete characterization of the actual use of homeopathy in Bulgaria, a comparative analysis has been conducted of the profile of its clinical application across the various groups studied.
6. The extent of the application of homeopathy by GPs in Bulgaria has been established, and the main factors influencing its clinical application have been identified.
7. For the first time in the international literature, attitudes toward integration and communication regarding CAM issues have been simultaneously investigated among GPs, medical students, and patients, and convergence has been established among the three groups with regard to the importance of open therapeutic communication.

Contributions of a confirmatory character

1. The study confirms that homeopathy holds a stable place in the health-related behavior of patients in Bulgaria.
2. Homeopathy is used in parallel with conventional treatment, with its social and practical legitimacy based predominantly on subjective experience and perceived usefulness rather than on scientific evidence.
3. Attitudes toward the use of homeopathy in Bulgaria correspond to data from international studies: patients are the most positive, GPs occupy a pragmatic middle position, and students are the most critical.
4. There is a significant communication barrier between patients and GPs regarding CAM issues, with approximately 50% of patients not disclosing their use of alternative methods to their physician.
5. The majority of patients do not perceive GPs as natural partners for homeopathic treatment and instead turn to classical individualized homeopathy and to a physician with more specific qualifications and greater clinical experience with the method.

6. Medical students occupy a dual position – simultaneously users of homeopathy and future physicians.

Contributions of a scientific-applied character

1. Awareness of homeopathy is a significant factor in support for training in homeopathy and CAM, both among GPs and among students.
2. Training in homeopathy is a leading factor in its clinical application by GPs, with additional qualification leading to greater clinical engagement and greater willingness for open communication with patients on the subject.
3. In order to increase the application of homeopathy in general medical practice, not only a change in physicians' attitudes but also their communication practice of actively sharing information with patients is essential.

Conclusion: The dissertation submitted meets the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB) and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Medical University of Varna.

All of the above gives me grounds to award a “Positive” evaluation for the conferral of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” upon Dr. Eva Hristova Ivanova.

17.08.2026

Prepared by:.

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§1, б. „Б“ от Регламент (ЕС)
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(Assoc. Prof. Zhenya Ruseva, MD, PhD)