OPINION

by

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regarding: dissertation for the award of an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" Field of higher education: 7. Healthcare and sports, professional field: 7.1 Medicine in the scientific specialty: General Medicine

Ivelina Lyudmilova Hristova-Nikolova

on the topic "CONGENITAL ANOMALIES OF THE KIDNEY AND URINARY TRACT IN CHILDREN UNDER 3 YEARS OF AGE"

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Valentina Madzova, MD

By decision of the Chair of the Scientific Jury and in accordance with Order No. R-109-518 of 16 December 2025 of the Rector of MU-Varna I am appointed to present an opinion on the dissertation of Dr. Ivelina Lyudmilova Hristova-Nikolova on the topic "Congenital anomalies of the kidney and urinary tract in children under 3 years of age" for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty General Medicine.

This opinion has been prepared and submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and RILDASRB.

Brief biographical information about the doctoral student.

Dr. Ivelina Lyudmilova Hristova-Nikolova graduated with a master's degree in Medicine from MU Varna in 2019. Since 2020, she has been a regular doctoral student in General Medicine. In 2023, she acquired a specialty in General Medicine.

The doctoral student began her career in 2019 at the AIPPMC “Dr. Vanya Alexandrova” in Varna, where she continues to work today. Since 2019, she has been an assistant at the Department of General Medicine at the Medical University of Varna.

Significance and relevance of the topic: The dissertation thesis of Dr. Ivelina Lyudmilova Hristova addresses a current and important practical problem with interdisciplinary significance. Congenital anomalies of the kidney and urinary tract are a major cause of chronic kidney disease in childhood, leading to serious complications, deterioration in the quality of life of affected patients, disability, and early mortality. The general practitioner plays a key role in the implementation of preventive measures. The GP is the most important source of information for parents, as well as a fundamental part of monitoring the development of children from birth and preventing the onset of chronic diseases or complications of existing ones.

Scope and structure: Dr. Ivelina Hristova's dissertation is 221 standard pages long and includes 60 figures and 71 tables. The bibliography consists of 407 references, 6 of which are in Cyrillic and 401 in Latin. It concludes with findings that support the need for research on the dissertation topic. The issues and content of the thesis are debatable and are of interest not only to general practitioners but also to a wider range of specialists in the field of children's health.

The literature review systematically examines the basic concepts related to the types of congenital anomalies of the excretory system, the causes of their occurrence, and the role of GPs in the early diagnosis of these anomalies. Bulgarian and international experience in this area is examined.

Research methodology: The aim of the study is to examine the knowledge and practices of GPs when there is suspicion of a congenital anomaly of the excretory system, as well as parents' awareness of the first signs of urinary tract infection and their attitude towards screening tests under the "Child Health Care" program.

To achieve this, the doctoral student has defined six main **tasks**:

1. To study the knowledge and practices of GPs when congenital anomalies of the urinary system are suspected.

2. To assess the importance of prevention and pediatric consultations with GPs for the diagnosis and timely treatment of UTI.

3. To develop a diagnostic algorithm for GPs to detect CAKUT in order to improve early diagnosis, reduce the occurrence of complications, and prevent chronic kidney disease.

4. To study parents' attitudes towards screening tests and consultations with specialists under the "Child Health Care" program.

5. To study parents' awareness of the first signs of urinary tract infection and risk factors and possible complications.

6. To increase parents' awareness of the first signs of urinary tract infection and symptoms of diseases of the urinary tract system, to conduct regular pediatric consultations, and to comply with the recommendations of the general practitioner for preventive examinations and consultative examinations.

The results are presented in text form and through 71 tables and 60 figures. The statistical processing used is adequate. The discussion is in-depth and well-systematized, comparing the author's own results with international ones for the most common congenital anomalies of the excretory system in childhood and the causes of their occurrence. It is in this chapter that Dr. Hristova's good knowledge and rich clinical experience, as well as her ability to critically analyze the results obtained, are evident. The own results presented are entirely sufficient for the accomplishment of the tasks set.

There are 10 **conclusions**, which logically follow the results obtained. They are well formulated, clear, and accurate.

The algorithm developed by the doctoral student for early diagnosis and management of CAKUT in children is extremely important for practice.

There are nine **contributions**, divided into two groups:

Original scientific and applied contributions

1. For the first time in Bulgaria, a study was conducted on CAKUT among the pediatric population, the role of GPs and parents in the detection and management of this pathology

2. For the first time, a survey was conducted among parents regarding their awareness and attitudes towards screening for CAKUT.

3. For the first time, a study was conducted among GPs on screening and practices related to the early diagnosis of CAKUT.

4. For the first time in Bulgaria, a practical algorithm for early diagnosis and GP behavior for CAKUT in childhood has been developed Contributions of a confirmatory nature

Confirmatory contributions

1. The key role of CAKUT in the development of CKD in early childhood is confirmed

2. The role of screening tests and GP clinical practices in the early diagnosis of CAKUT is confirmed

3. The need for earlier screening tests, expansion of the test panel, and mandatory genetic counseling during pregnancy is confirmed

4. Confirms the need for training to raise parents' awareness of the first symptoms of excretory system pathology in childhood

5. Confirms the need to develop a national pediatric registry for CAKUT and CKD

Conclusion

The dissertation meets 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 MU-Varna.

All this gives me reason to give a positive assessment for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" to Dr. Ivelina Lyudmilova Hristova-Nikolova.

08.02.2026

Opinion prepa

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

Assoc. Pro