

# Opinion

by Assoc. Prof. Kalina Gocheva Andreevska, Ph.D. - Lecturer at the Department of Physical Chemistry at the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy, Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski", Sofia

Regarding: Procedure for the defense of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor", in the professional field 7. Z Pharmacy, under the doctoral program "Pharmacoeconomics and Pharmaceutical Regulation".

Topic of the dissertation:

*"Study of the possibilities of pharmaceutical care for improving therapeutic results and preventing complications in patients with ankylosing spondylitis"*

Author of the dissertation:

M.Pharm. LADA ALEKSANDROVA ANDREEVA - PhD student in independent study at the Medical University-Varna.

Scientific supervisor: Assoc. Prof.M.Pharm. Anna Hristova Todorova, M.D.

Scientific consultant: Prof.M.Pharm. Valentina Petkova-Dimitrova, Ph.D.

The dissertation submitted for evaluation is dedicated to a current, significant and clearly practical problem in the field of pharmaceutical care and social pharmacy. Ankylosing spondylitis is characterized as a chronic and progressive disease from the group of spondyloarthritis, which affects mainly young patients and leads to a significant deterioration in the quality of life, functional limitations and adverse socio-economic consequences. Despite the progress achieved in therapeutic approaches, including the introduction of biological medicinal products, significant challenges remain related to achieving optimal control of the disease, ensuring good adherence to therapy and effective prevention of complications. The research topic is directly related to the need to improve therapeutic outcomes in patients with this disease, and to optimizing the multidisciplinary approach in healthcare.

The dissertation is structured logically and complies with the established regulatory requirements. The literature review is comprehensive, well-systematized and demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the current state of the problem. Key aspects related to the pathogenesis, diagnosis and therapy of ankylosing spondylitis, as well as the role of pharmaceutical care in the management of the disease, are examined.

The goal, the six tasks and the scientific hypotheses are clearly formulated, logically justified and adequately correspond to the subject of the study. The methods used – documentary, sociological and statistical – are appropriately selected and allow obtaining reliable and valid results.

The results of the conducted studies are presented clearly, analyzed in depth and interpreted correctly. Particular attention deserves the established dependencies between the professional training and the attitudes of pharmacists to the provision of pharmaceutical care, as well as the identified problems related to adherence to therapy in patients. The data obtained reveal

significant potential for expanding the role of the pharmacist in the process of treatment and monitoring of patients with ankylosing spondylitis.

A significant contribution of the dissertation is the development of practically oriented tools – an algorithm for pharmaceutical care, a screening questionnaire and training materials, which have direct applicability in pharmacy practice. These developments create real prerequisites for improving the quality of pharmaceutical services and for more effective participation of the pharmacist in the multidisciplinary health team.

The dissertation contains clearly formulated contributions, which can be systematized in the following main areas:

### 1. Scientific and theoretical contributions

1.1. The study expands and deepens theoretical knowledge regarding the role of the pharmacist in the early recognition and comprehensive management of patients with ankylosing spondylitis, by identifying significant deficits in knowledge and factors determining professional readiness;

1.2. For the first time, a comprehensive characterization of patients with ankylosing spondylitis was carried out at the regional level, covering socio-demographic indicators, comorbidity, health-behavioral characteristics, applied therapeutic approaches, disease activity, quality of life and degree of adherence to treatment;

1.3. Significant dependencies were established between modifiable health-behavioral factors (smoking, physical activity, sleep) and the level of disease activity, which contributes to a deeper understanding of the clinical course of the disease and the possibilities for its control.

### 2. Scientific and practical contributions

2.1. Practically oriented tools have been developed – an algorithm for pharmaceutical care, a screening checklist and training materials, tailored to the identified educational and practical needs of pharmacists, which support the implementation of pharmaceutical care and early referral to a specialist rheumatologist in pharmacy practice;

2.2. Factors with direct practical importance for the control of disease activity have been identified, which creates opportunities for the implementation of an individualized approach in patient care;

2.3. A high frequency of low adherence to the prescribed therapy has been established, as well as the importance of educational interventions to improve therapeutic adherence;

2.4. The importance of the pharmacist's active participation in the comprehensive care of patients with ankylosing spondylitis has been argued.

The formulated scientific and applied scientific contributions are justified and reflect the achieved results. They contribute to expanding knowledge about pharmaceutical care in chronic diseases and outline prospects for their development in a national context.

The abstract is prepared in accordance with the requirements and correctly reflects the content and main results of the dissertation work. The presented publication activity is sufficient and testifies to the personal contribution of the doctoral student. She has submitted 5 publications, one of which is in a journal with an impact factor.

Conclusion:

The dissertation work of M.A. Pharm. Lada Alexandrova Andreeva fully meets the requirements of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the relevant regulations of the Medical University of Varna. The study is distinguished by a high scientific level, good methodological justification and clearly expressed practical applicability, which defines it as a significant contribution in the field of pharmaceutical care. In the process of developing the dissertation, the doctoral student demonstrated in-depth theoretical knowledge, a high degree of analytical skills and the ability to critically interpret scientific data. She stands out with a consistent and systematic approach to research work, precision in the application of methods and the ability to formulate justified and practically applicable conclusions. The presented results are original and significant, contributing to expanding knowledge about the role of the pharmacist in the care of patients with ankylosing spondylitis and outlining opportunities for more effective integration of pharmaceutical care in the health system.

Based on the above, I give a positive assessment of the dissertation and I strongly recommend that the esteemed scientific jury award Mag. Pharm. Lada Alexandrova Andreeva the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

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