

STATEMENT

By **assoc. prof. Nevyana Feschieva, MD, PhD**

of dissertation work

CONTINUING EDUCATION OF MIDWIFE – INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”
in the field of higher education 7. “Healthcare and Sport”,
professional field 7.4. “Public Health”,
scientific specialty “Health Care Management”

I have been appointed as a Member of the Scientific Jury, pursuant to Order No. – № P-109-277 of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna and on a Protocol №1/03.08.2020 to present a statement on a procedure for acquiring an educational and scientific degree “Doctor” to Zhana Georgieva Pavlovska, applied for a part-time PhD degree under the doctoral program Health Care Management in the field of Higher Education: - 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional field: 7.4. Public Health, specialty Healthcare management on a Continuing education of midwife – innovative educational approaches.

Brief career profile of the applicant. *Education:* Mrs. Zhana Georgieva Pavlovska obtained her basic education in Institute for health professionals “Dr. Nencho Nikolaev” – Varna, specialty Midwifery

She acquired a Bachelor's degree (2000) in Health care management and professional qualification as Health care manager and a practice trainer at medical college and a Master degree in Health care management from Medical University – Pleven.

Professional career: After her graduation, for 4 years (1983-1987), she worked as midwife in village of Resen, Veliko Tarnovo county. Zhana Pavlovska worked in the Intensive care Unit in the Neonatology ward at “Stefan Cherkezov” multiprofile hospital for active treatment in Veliko Turnovo. She worked as a Senior midwife in Gynecological Ward.

In the period 2011-2015 she worked as a Senior midwife at Obstetrics and Gynecology Ward at ‘Stefan Cherkezov’ multiprofile hospital for active treatment in Veliko Turnovo.

She elaborated two projects: Improving the quality of postoperative care in the Gynecological Ward at “Stefan Cherkezov” multiprofile hospital for active treatment in Veliko Turnovo, by introducing a care plan and reducing postoperative stay” and “Vision for management, optimization and improvement of the quality of health care”.

Since 2015 to the present day, Zhana Pavlovska has been working as a assistant professor in Veliko Tarnovo Affiliate of Medical University – Varna.

Mrs. Zhana Pavlovksa upgrades her knowledge with more than 30 lifelong learning courses

She uses Russian and English languages. She is a member of BAHCP, and since 2003, she is a chairperson of the Regional Board of BAHCP office in Veliko Tarnovo. She has been awarded Leseskepra award statue (2014).

Evaluation of the applicant's research work

Description of the dissertation

The PhD thesis has been written in 189 pages and has been structured in 5 chapters. It contains 69 figures, 7 tables and 6 appendices. The references contains 205 titles – 96 in Cyrillic, 67 in Latin and 42 web links.

Relevance of the dissertation work

One of the great challenges of modern public health is to ensure persistence of care for patients and the healthy people. The Health 2020 concept emphasizes the key role of nurses and midwives in this process. Midwives play a crucial role in family planning and reproductive health, in promoting safe motherhood and in caring for the newborn in its family.

Their adaptation to changing technologies and methods of work requires updating / developing knowledge and skills through a reliable tool, as recognized by Continuing Education. Continuing Education (CE) as a topic of the dissertation is very relevant because it refers to a medical profession that is in a pre-crisis. The theoretical consideration of the problem has the chance to reveal unknown aspects of it, as well as to point out possible practical solutions for strengthening the professional capacity and stability.

The PhD student represents a Literary Review in 9 paragraphs, in which she discusses the theoretical foundations of CE, as well as its regulation in various European countries and Bulgaria, policies and good practices. Mrs. Zhana Pavlovska is familiar to the problem, which makes the Literature Review an useful read for managers at different levels and practicing midwives.

Based on the review of literature sources, the PhD student identifies as a sensitive area for study the approaches for evaluation of the results of the CE.

The aim is clearly defined: based on an analysis of continuing midwife's education in European systems and surveyed opinion of different groups of respondents, a SWOT analysis of the existing reality in our country to be made and an innovative model for evaluating the results of continuing education to be proposed.

Eight tasks are formulated directed at achieving this aim, six of which are exploratory:

- Review and comparative analysis of the systematization for continuing obstetric training in Bulgaria and Europe in terms of legal regulation, licensing, organization, control, financing and stimulation of activities.
- Survey of the awareness of the midwives and students about the continuation of their education and their attitudes to participate in activities, contact the raising of the qualification and the continuous professional development.
- Survey of the health care leaders on their role in the process of continuing education of midwives.
- Identification of the factors hindering the effective continuing education.
- SWOT analysis of the continuing education of midwives in our country.
- To prove the need to develop and implement new approaches for control and evaluation of continuing education related to the basic guidelines for quality and safety of obstetric care.

The other two tasks are directed at developing a new organizational technology: A model for assessment of continuing education and experts' opinion on it.

The methodology is suitable and adequate to the research aim and tasks. Research hypotheses are developed, the stages of the research work are presented, objects are described, the way of forming the samples, the units of observation and their features. The scope of the study corresponds to the formulated tasks:

- Midwives working in OGW and Neonatology wards in medical institutions in the towns of Sofia, Pleven, Varna, Ruse, Gabrovo, Kardzhali, Razgrad, Sliven, Targovishte, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Sevlievo (**n = 324**);

- 3rd and 4th year students studying in the specialty "Midwifery" at MU - Sofia, MU - Pleven, RU "Angel Kanchev", MU - Varna and the affiliates of the university in Sliven, Veliko Tarnovo and Shumen (**n = 104**);

- Health care managers (head and senior midwives / nurses) working in obstetrics and gynecology wards / clinics and neonatology wards (**n = 58**);

- Habilitated lecturers with basic medical education "Midwifery" and "Nurse" from MU - Sofia, MU - Pleven, RU "Angel Kanchev" - Ruse, MU - Varna and the affiliates of the university in the towns of Veliko Tarnovo and Shumen (**n = 12**).

The applied research methods are adequate to the set aim and objectives:

- Documentary - content method. Researched normative documents of the WHO, the EU and the Republic of Bulgaria related to the midwife's CE.
- Qualitative content analysis of documents - using a constructive approach, an analysis of the considered documents is made through interpretation.
- Questionnaire method
 - ✓ Primary sociological information was collected through 3 author's questionnaires and a direct individual anonymous survey with regular midwives, students and experts (chief/senior midwives / nurses).
 - ✓ Questionnaire for habilitated lecturers - semi-standardized interview
- SWOT analysis to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the CE of midwives in Bulgaria, the threats and prospects arising from the current situation in our country.
- Statistic methods: Comparative analysis; Parametric and non-parametric tests – for hypothesis evaluation – statistical comparison χ^2 analysis for testing hypotheses for connection between qualitative variables. Variation analysis – measures the differences in the population on a certain basis. Correlation analysis – to establish the degree of correlation between two variables. Graphic analysis – shows graphically processed data from the survey.

Assessment of results and contributions.

It has been established that continuing education in Bulgaria meets WHO criteria for legal regulation, organization; training based on research, evidence and competence and is provided through a variety of activities.

There are no established quality standards for continuing education.

Largely, the surveyed midwives (62%) positively assess the continuing education, as the leading motives for involvement in activities for raising the qualification are the expansion of knowledge and skills (66%), as well as personal self-improvement (35%).

Students show greater readiness to improve their qualifications, especially in terms of acquiring a specialty - 46%, while for midwives it is 7%

According to the midwives, barriers to CE are insufficient financial resources (69%), distance from home (32%), duration of training (20%).

The preferred forms of professional development of working midwives are courses (50%) and theoretical and practical seminars (31%). The data are similar for students, but they are also aimed at obtaining a master's degree.

The implementation of "quality health care" and the increase of professional competence are leading contributions of both midwives and health care managers. This indirectly confirms the approval of the CE based on the value orientation of the respondents.

The developed SWOT analysis outlines very well the strengths and weaknesses, as well as threats and opportunities and thus shapes the picture of CE of midwives in our country. The non-inclusion of patient and staff safety in the CE is a very significant weakness. This disregard of European requirements must be urgent overcome. I would point out that some of the threats identified as threats are already a fact, such as: the aging of the Midwifery realm and declining interest in the profession are already fact and should be included as weaknesses.

An essential part of Mrs. Zhana Pavlovska's work is the developed **Algorithm for effective management of continuing education** with the inclusion of all steps: What to be studied?; How to study?; Conduction of education; Benefits and Terms of assessment.

The algorithm provides for an assessment of 3 and 5 years period, and for new graduates - annually. The proposal of three levels of assessment allows for the participation of employers, Regional Board of BAHCP and BAHCP as a regulatory body.

With a developed and very well illustrated algorithm, the doctoral student shows opportunities for organizational planning of necessary activities, moreover, that she indicates when the need arises and the reason of its appearance. The algorithm is an element of health care management and has great potential for implementation.

Continuing education assessment model is based on the results of the dissertation.

The doctoral student proves the necessity of strengthening the control over the implementation of the activities based on the received data. The developed Continuing education assessment model guarantees better motivation for participation in it, as well as employers for better professional development of staff.

The abstract reflects the essential moments of the dissertation. Four publications were made in Bulgarian journals and conference proceedings in connection with the dissertation,.

I agree with the contributions offered by the doctoral student

Conclusion.

The dissertation "Continuing education of midwife – innovative educational approaches" is developed on a relevant topic, well set and executed as a research, personal work of the doctoral student. It is a complete scientific product, with sufficient cognitive and practical contributions. The presented innovative approaches to manage and assess CE are original and have the potential for application in medical institutions throughout the country.

The work fully meets the requirements of Law of the Development of Academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of its implementations for the Development of Academic Staff at the Medical University - Varna.

The assessment of all merits of the PhD dissertation gives me a reason for positive statement and convinced to suggest to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to vote in favor for Assistant Professor Zhana Georgieva Pavlovska to acquire the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 7. Health care and sport; professional direction 7.4. Public health; scientific specialty "Health Care Management"

18.09.2020 r

Member of Scientific Jury:

Assoc.prof. N.Feschieva, MD, PhD

