

STATEMENT

from

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**External member of the Scientific Jury, appointed by order No. R-109-
406/25.10.2022 of the Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev
Stoyanov" - Varna**

Regarding: the dissertation on:

**"Enhanced recovery after surgical treatment (ERAS - Enhanced Recovery
After Surgery protocol) in gynecological surgery"**

For awarding the scientific degree "DOCTOR OF SCIENCES"

*Field of higher education: 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.1
Medicine, scientific specialty "Obstetrics and gynecology"*

of Associate Professor Stanislav Hristov Slavchev MD, PhD

Brief biographical data and career profile

Assoc. Prof. Stanislav Hristov Slavchev graduated in medicine in 1996. He has a recognized specialty "Obstetrics and Gynecology" since 2009. In 2016, he defended his dissertation and obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". Since 2019, he is an associate professor in the specialty "Obstetrics and Gynecology" at the Medical University - Varna. Assoc. Prof. Slavchev has completed additional qualifications, mainly in the field of operative gynecology. His publication activity includes 38 articles and one monograph. He is currently an obstetrician-gynecologist at the Clinic of Gynecology at the MHAT "St. Anna"- Varna.

Relevance of the topic

Assoc. Prof. Slavchev has developed in his dissertation an important issue - the program for enhanced recovery after surgery (ERAS) in the spectrum of gynecology. The idea of this complex, multidisciplinary system of procedures arose at the end of the last century and rapidly developed in various surgical specialties. Its main goal is to reduce surgical stress and to optimize and shorten the postoperative stay. The basic components of ERAS include perioperative procedures for maintenance of water-salt and energy balance, pain management, prevention of postoperative infections and venous thromboembolism, early nutrition and exercise. Adequate application of these complex measures leads to improvement of patients' quality of life, as well as to reduction of treatment costs.

Structure of the dissertation

The presented work is 152 standard pages long. It is illustrated with 7 tables and 16 colored figures. The bibliography includes 432 literary sources. The topics discussed in it are related to the specific studies of the dissertation student. They explore current issues of pre-, intra- and post-operative care in gynecological/oncological surgery. Findings from these studies help shape evidence-based ERAS recommendations.

The dissertation is properly structured, its content meets the requirements. The proportion between the separate sections is respected. It includes: introduction, literature review, aim, objectives, clinical contingent and methodology, results and discussion, conclusions, contributions and bibliography.

Purpose and tasks

The aim is to evaluate the applicability and effect of the ERAS protocol in operative gynecology. It is clearly and precisely formulated and is based on an audit and report of perioperative results. To achieve this, eleven tasks have been set, which include the study of all aspects of perioperative care - early movement and early feeding, antimicrobial prophylaxis, analgesia, prevention of hypothermia. The applicability and effect of the ERAS protocol were evaluated separately for minimally invasive and oncogynecological surgeries. According to the recommendations of the protocol, the minimum postoperative stay for various gynecological operations is aimed at determining.

Clinical contingent and methodology

A prospective clinical-epidemiological study was conducted, covering patients admitted for planned operations in the Clinic of Gynecology, MHAT "St. Anna" - Varna. The study was conducted over a period of 14 months, including 121 patients with an average age of 52.6 years. After signing the informed consent, the patients were treated and studied according to the prepared ERAS protocol. It contains precise and detailed procedures on the day before the operation, on the day of the operation and after the operation. The reporting of indicators and results is documented in the "ERAS System Study Sheet".

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Modern methods for mathematical analysis of the processed results are applied.

Results and discussion

The obtained results are presented sequentially in a logical order according to the set eleven tasks and are well illustrated with tables and colored figures. For each task, the results are analyzed, which is the basis for correct conclusions. A comparison and discussion with the data of other considered authors on the specific topic is made.

Assessment of findings

The conclusions in the dissertation are eleven in number, and they are solidly supported by the research data. Among them, I would highlight the following facts:

- Early movement was achieved in 95%, and early intake of liquids – in 99% of the operated.
- Preoperative intake of carbohydrate-rich fluids is the mainstay of postoperative hyperglycemia control.
- Antibiotic prophylaxis is imperative and applicable to all patients. It correlates with a low % of postoperative complications – fever in 3.3% and surgical wound infection in 1.6%.
- Administered opioid-sparing analgesia and antiemetic prophylaxis effectively eliminated postoperative pain (88%), nausea (85%) and vomiting (84%).
- Application of the ERAS protocol is the basis of rapid recovery of intestinal function.

- Avoiding hypothermia during surgery is associated with minimal intraoperative blood loss (up to 200 ml) in 95% of cases.
- The application of the ERAS protocol allows the application of recommendations for optimized postoperative stay in various types of gynecological operations for benign and malignant diseases.

Evaluation of dissertation contributions

Eight contributions are listed. Three of them are original and applied-practical in nature. Five contributions are of a confirmatory nature. All of them reflect the real scientific value of the studies carried out and the results obtained. Contributions have a certain practical value. The application of the ERAS protocol in operative gynecology helps to accelerate recovery in the postoperative period, while improving the quality of life.

Scientific activity

Prof. Dr. Slavchev has indicated ten publications related to the topic of the dissertation in Bulgarian and foreign journals. On the same topic, two reports were presented at a scientific forum.

Conclusion

The dissertation work of Assoc. Prof. Slavchev represents a current and useful study for gynecological science and practice. The candidate fully meets the necessary scientometric requirements. The complex evaluation of this work gives me the reason to recommend to the respected Scientific Jury to award the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” in the professional direction “Medicine” in the scientific specialty “Obstetrics and Gynecology” to Assoc. Prof. Stanislav Hristov Slavchev.

Date: 5/12/2022

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Signature:.....

Assoc. Prof. Tihomir Totev, MD, PhD