

## STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Mariana Nikolova Dimitrova, Ph.D.

Department of Health Care, Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna

On dissertation work

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY, TEAM CARE IN THE PROPHYLAXIS OF CHILDREN'S EYE HEALTH - PROFESSIONAL FOCUS OF THE NURSE**

**By Krassimira Ivanova Dimitrova**

For the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Science"

Field of higher education: 7. Health and sports

Professional field: 7.4. Public Health

Specialty: "Health Care Management"

With supervisors:

Corresponding Member Prof. Dr. Hristina Nikolova Grupcheva, MD

Prof. Silvia Borisova Dimitrova, Ph.D.

With a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine Order № P-109-497 of 22.11.2021 and an Executive Order of the Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna, I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury, and on the basis of Protocol № 1 / 01.12.2021 I have been appointed to provide a statement on Krassimira Ivanova Dimitrova a PhD student in an independent form of study in the Doctoral Program "Health Care Management", on her dissertation for acquiring the scientific degree of "Doctor of Science". The student has been appointed by order № P-109-226 / 09.07.2020 at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov", Faculty of Public Health, Department of Health Care.

All necessary documents provided in the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria alongside the Regulations manual and the Regulations for the development of the scientific staff at the Medical University - Varna are presented.

### **Biographical data and career development**

Krassimira Ivanova Dimitrova was born in 1966 in Varna and graduated her secondary degree from Medical College in Varna "Dr. Nencho Nikolaev" in the specialty of "paediatric nurse" in 1987. She received the qualification of a "specialist" in 2003 in medical university Varna.

Following the aspiration for development she continues her studies and in 2009 she acquired a bachelor's degree in Health Care Management at the Medical University of Varna. A year later (2010) she acquires a master's degree in the Medical University of Pleven. In the period of 2017 - 2019 she obtains a master's degree in "Health Management" at MU-Varna. Krassimira Dimitrova's career development began in 1987 in the First Children's Clinic of the

University Hospital "St. Marina" - Varna. In the period between 1996 and 2011 she worked as a nurse in the operating rooms at SBOBAL - Varna EOOD. In 2012 she held the position of senior nurse in the eye department where she works today. In 2020 she is enrolled as a doctoral student in an independent study scheme at the Department of Health Care in the specialty "Health Care Management". She conducts classes in the following disciplines: Nursing care for eye and ENT diseases; Special care for people with eye problems; Training / clinical practice. She has completed numerous courses for continuous professional training and participation in presentations in international and national conferences. She is a co-writer in two textbooks on eye diseases for medical and dentistry student edited by Prof. Dr. Hristina Grupcheva.

The student is a member of the Bulgarian Association of Healthcare Professionals, Union of Scientists - Varna, Department of Medicine and Dental Medicine. She also knows French, English and Russian.

### **Descriptive characteristics of the dissertation**

In terms of its volume and structure, the work fully complies with the requirements for the structuring of a dissertation for the achievement of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor of Science". The dissertation contains 184 pages and is illustrated with 56 figures and 24 tables. 330 literary sources were cited, of which 83 in Cyrillic and 247 in Latin. The book illustrates the author's wide awareness and up-to-date knowledge.

The dissertation is developed in theoretical and empirical terms. Structurally, the scientific work is presented in five chapters - literature review, methodology and organization of the study, results and discussion of surveys conducted among nurses who provide ophthalmic health care and students and parents of children seeking prophylaxis. In addition to this the work presents the results of a standardized interview among experts - doctors working in ophthalmological practice are also presented.

### **Assessment of the relevance of the topic**

The topic of Krassimira Dimitrova's dissertation "Multidisciplinary, team care in the prophylaxis of children's eye health - a professional focus on nurses" is distinguishable by its many aspects, relevance and importance, given the high growth of visual impairments worldwide. Prophylaxis in children's eye health is a prerequisite for early detection of visual disorders in children, timely treatments and prevention of adverse health effects resulting from children's eye diseases. The participation of nurses in multidisciplinary teams for the prophylaxis of children's eye health is an opportunity for improvement in children's eye health and quality of life. The conducted comprehensive and in-depth scientific research outlines the main problems in the field of children's eye health and the reason for the author to propose Models of multidisciplinary team care for the prophylaxis of children's eye health.

### **Literature review**

The author makes a thorough and in-depth theoretical review and analysis of current literature sources, which is a prerequisite for the doctoral student to reach significant conclusions and summaries for empirical research. Theoretical analysis of organizations and teams for preventive care in the protection of children's eye health is applied. Normative documents regulating preventive activities in Bulgaria have been studied. A comparative analysis of the practices in the field of prophylaxis was made, extracted from international protocols and programs for children's eye health and visual screening. Theoretical analysis of the professional roles and functions of the nurse in the multidisciplinary team in ophthalmological care is applied, according to the international standards of the professions. It differentiates the role of the nurse in the protection of children's eye health, as an opportunity to apply models of health care in the ophthalmological sphere.

The logically structured literature review reveals the broad competencies of the student in the field in the subject of the dissertation.

### **Research methodology**

Krassimira Dimitrova has outlined in detail the purpose of the study: "To study and analyse the methods for prophylaxis in children's eye health, to identify the specificities in multidisciplinary team care and to define the functions of the nurse in such a multidisciplinary team." In order to analyse the subject at hand, 9 specific tasks are set out to achieve the goals of the study. Three research hypotheses are formulated. The organization of the study is competently and correctly described and includes: subject, object, scope of the study, logical units. The design of the study includes theoretical and empirical research. Criteria for inclusion and exclusion in the study have been defined. The methodology of the research is presented in detail, reflecting specific actions, place of implementation and the period of implementation. The design of the study is professionally developed, reflecting the international research experience and views of the PhD student. For the purposes of the quantitative research, a standardised interview questionnaire in three versions is developed.

The applied research methods are suitably peer reviewed and are both sociologically and statistically suitable for the goals and objectives of the study and allows the researcher to establish dependencies across the factors.

The methodology fully meets the accepted scientific standards, inspires confidence in the reliability of the results and evidently shows of the preparation of the doctoral student to carry out independent research work.

### **Results and discussion**

The multidisciplinary team care in the prevention of children's eye health issues has been assessed through the opinion of experts - doctors, ophthalmologists, nurses, students and parents. One of the factors studied is the awareness and practices in health care of parents of children up to 16 years of age. Within this subject the researcher has emphasized the main

challenges and existing problems regarding the awareness, actions and aspects of the health care practice among parents. One of the other studied factors is student's perception on participating in a multidisciplinary team care in the prophylaxis of children's eye health. The reported positive attitude of students towards the multidisciplinary team approach is in line with current trends in the prevention of visual impairments in childhood and prophylaxis. The expert assessment of doctors and ophthalmologists confirms the need for a multidisciplinary approach and having clear roles in a team. The researchers also present an in-depth analysis of the role and functions of the nurse, as a full and autonomous member of a multidisciplinary team for the prophylaxis and improvement of children's eye health.

The accurate statistical processing of the data and the analysis of the Bulgarian and international practice allows the phd student to justify the application of a Model of multidisciplinary team care for the prophylaxis of children's eye health. The model allows information flow across different departments involved in children's eye healthcare. Broad-spectrum integration puts the patient and child eye health at the heart of the model. The model reflects the author's concept of expanding the professional spectrum and optimizing the autonomous role of the nurse. Of high scientific value are the author's works concerning the multidisciplinary teams, ophthalmological health care, the functions of the nurse, terms for follow-up and indications for referring a child and training of specialists and parents will significantly support the practical application of the model. The presented summary model of the efficiency of the multidisciplinary team demonstrates the focal points and values of the teams and how the teams function, whilst taking into account the contribution of each specialist to team efficiency. The functions of the modern nurse in the multidisciplinary team for the prophylaxis of children's eye health are presented precisely and in detail. In order to improve the awareness of parents and the care of children's vision, the doctoral student also presents her own "Diary of children's eye health".

The conclusions are clearly formulated, practically oriented, follow the set research tasks and carry out logical deductions on the basis of obtained results.

I agree with the self-assessment of the doctoral student regarding the contributions of a theoretical and practical nature. Rational proposals have been made to responsible institutions aimed at the participation of the nurse in the prophylaxis of children's eye health.

The abstract is prepared according to the requirements and reflects the most important moments of the dissertation. It is well illustrated with informative tables, figures and diagrams. In connection with the dissertation, five scientific publications have been made.

### **Personal impressions**

I have known Krassimira Dimitrova for more than ten years and I have largely witnessed her professional development. I appreciate her determination, responsibility, diligence and strive for improvement. Her communication skills, desire to achieve results and high motivation to work are excellent features that make her a good professional and researcher.

### **Conclusion**

The dissertation on "Multidisciplinary, team care in the prophylaxis of children's eye health - professional focus on the nurse" presented by Krassimira Dimitrova created for the purposes of obtaining the scientific degree "Doctor of Science" is a thorough research, developed on a current topic, well-structured and accomplished on very good scientific level. The author's scientific achievements stand out with originality and is easy to apply in practise.

The dissertation meets all the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff in MU - Varna.

The dissertation shows that Krassimira Dimitrova has in-depth theoretical training and professional skills, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent research.

The above merits and contributions of the dissertation are grounds to give a positive opinion and I strongly suggest to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Krassimira Ivanova Dimitrova in "Health Care Management" in higher education 7. Health and sports; professional field 7.4. Public Health.

23.12.2021  
City: Varna

Assoc. Prof. Mariana Nikolova, Prof. HC .....  
Member of Scientific Jury

