

REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Radost Spiridonova Asenova, MD, PhD, DCs(Med)
Head of the Department Urology and General Practice
Medical University of Plovdiv

of a dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

Professional field: 7.1 Medicine,
Scientific specialty: General Practice

Author: Stefan Kostov Fartunov, MD

Department: „General Medicine“, Faculty of Medicine, Medical University Varna “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”

Topic: Medico-social problems and attitudes to optional abortions in Bulgaria

Supervisor: Prof. Valentina Majova, MD, PhD

The Statement is written pursuant to the Order of the Rector of Medical University of Varna №P-109-593/31.12.2021

General presentation of the procedure

The presented set of materials on an electronic and written media is in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of Medical University of Varna and includes all the necessary documents related to the procedure.

Dr. Stefan Kostov Fartunov was born in the city of Varna, where he graduated as a doctor from the Medical University of Varna in 1998. The colleague also acquired a second master's degree at the same university - Health Management, in 2009. Dr. Fartunov began his professional career at the Emergency Medical Center, where he worked for nine years. A period of four years

followed during which he gained experience as a pharmaceutical company representative. In 2004 Dr. Fartunov obtained a diploma in obstetrics and gynecology. Within one year he was a consultant in Obstetrics and Gynecology unit at the Transport Hospital. Since 2011 practices as an obstetrician-gynecologist at the Medical Center "St. Marina" - Varna. Dr. Fartunov has many additional professional qualifications in the field of clinical and scientific interest: a course in colposcopy and destructive treatment of the cervix, ultrasound of the mammary gland and others. His scientific career began with his appointment as an Assistant Professor in the Department of General Medicine in 2015, where he taught students and residents. In 2019 he enrolled in an independent form of dissertation, and a year later he successfully defended his doctoral minimum exam in the specialty. Dr. Fartunov is a member of EURACT - European Academy of Teachers in General Practice and Family Medicine.

Relevance of the dissertation

In connection with the choice of the topic for the dissertation and its relevance, I strongly believe that the topic of the study is relevant for general practice and concerns an important medical, social, and practical problem. Bulgaria is among the countries with an unfavorable trend regarding population aging. It is well known that the population of Bulgaria is rapidly declining due to low birth rates, high mortality, and emigration of young people. In this direction are the data on the high frequency of abortions, those on request, among women of childbearing age in recent decades. The reasons are diverse, and the role of GPs is key in the formation of attitudes and values in patients in the direction of protecting reproductive health. The medico-social significance of abortions-at will also explains the need for an interdisciplinary approach in the search for solutions and the interest of the scientific medical community in this problem. The importance of the topic, in its various dimensions - medical, social, ethical and others, is the basis of developed many strategies and local initiatives, which are steps to reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancies and abortions. On the other hand, regardless of what has been achieved in this area, voluntary abortions remain a high percentage and one of the main ways to terminate a pregnancy in our country. This gives Dr Fartunov the opportunity to conduct his research in the direction of deriving specific measures to reduce unwanted pregnancies and reduce abortions at the level of general practice.

Knowledge of the problem

Dr. Stefan Fartunov demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the Bulgarian and world experience in the researched issues. The analytical assessment of the obtained information related to the theme of the dissertation is done. The precisely identified scientific and applicable contributions are an additional argument in this respect.

Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and its contributions

Structurally, the study meets the requirements for dissertation work. It is sustained in scientific relations and stylistics. The dissertation is written on 154 pages, well designed, illustrated with 38 figures, 63 tables and 2 appendices. The reference list is represented by 144 sources, of which 36 are in Cyrillic and 108 in Latin.

Dr. Fartunov makes an in-depth analysis of the types of abortions and the reason for this. The complications and consequences that may occur after abortion are presented in detail. An important focus in the literature review are the ethical issues related to abortion, as well as demographic trends in Bulgaria and the European Union. The wide-ranging approach and the inclusion of data on the importance of family planning and the use of modern contraception make a good impression. The importance of legislative documents is indisputable as a framework that predetermines certain behavior, both on the part of the patient and the physician. In this sense, the critical analysis of the existing system and the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies applied over the years to deal with this problem are another merit of the dissertation.

The aim of the dissertation was to study the medical and social problems and attitudes of women of reproductive age to abortions at will in our country in order to optimize the activities of GPs and obstetricians to promote women's health and family planning. To achieve this, the dissertation has identified five main tasks that logically follow from the goal. They are clearly formulated and provide an opportunity to draw important conclusions for practice.

Appropriately selected and described in detail are the design of the study, the sociological methods used and the applied analyzes to assess the problems posed. The obtained results cover all set tasks and are presented in text in a volume of 54 pages. The rich and precise visualization with tables and figures makes a good impression. The statistical processing used is adequate.

The discussion is thorough and well systematized. The interrelations found between the individual studied parameters are described.

The author has summarized the results in eleven conclusions, which logically follow the results obtained and are well formulated, clear and accurate. It is impressive that the large percentage of women who perform abortions at will are of childbearing age between 18-30 years, mostly of Bulgarian ethnicity, with higher education, average standard of living according to self-assessment and living in big cities. In addition, about 50% of women surveyed have had at least one voluntary abortion so far, with the first abortion occurring between the ages of 18 and 20. The need of GP and specialists, of developed programs for affordable counseling in connection with reproductive and sexual health, was determined as crucial, as well as the necessary of development of programs for affordable counseling in connection with reproductive and sexual health, implemented by GPs and obstetricians.

The specific recommendations and proposals made are definitely practical and useful for specialists in the field of reproductive health.

I accept the scientific contributions presented.

Assessment of the candidate's publications and personal contributions

Regarding the dissertation two publications with a reference to Scopus are presented, in which doctor Fartunov is the first author.

Summary of the dissertation

The presented summary of the dissertation is prepared according to the requirements and reflects the main results objectively.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains original scientific contributions which are original contribution to science and meet all requirements from the Law on Development of the Academic Staff of Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), Rules and Regulations for application of LDASRB and the Rules and Regulations of Medical University of Varna. The presented materials and dissertation results fully comply with the specific requirements approved in the Rules and Regulations of

Medical University of Varna for application of LDASRB. I believe that significant scientific research on actual problems and with practical orientation in General Practice has been done.

Due to the above-mentioned, I give my positive assessment on the conducted research, presented by the dissertation, summary of a dissertation and achieved results and contributions and suggest to the members of the Honourable Scientific Committee that the doctor Stefan Fartunov be awarded the educational and scientific degree Doctor, in the scientific specialty General Practice, professional field 7.1 Medicine, from the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sport.

27.01.2022

Plovdiv

Reviewer:

Assoc. Prof. Radost Spiridonova Asenova, MD, PhD, DCs(Med)

Head of the Department Urology and General Practice

Medical University of Plovdiv