

## **STANDPOINT**

Issued by Assoc. Prof. Tanya Paskaleva Stoycheva, Ph.D  
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dissertation work for the award of an educational and scientific degree

### **"DOCTOR"**

Field of higher education: 7. "Healthcare and Sports"  
Professional field: 7.4. "Public Health"  
Scientific major "Healthcare Management"

Author of the dissertation: Teodora Yordanova Todorova

Dissertation topic: "Postponing parenthood - the midwife's role in overcoming the causes"

Research supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Teodora Evtimova, Ph.D.

### **Presentation of the general procedure**

I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury to work out a standpoint on the defense of a dissertation on the topic: "Postponing parenthood - the midwife's role in overcoming the causes" of Teodora Yordanova Todorova subject to Order N: P-109-125/16.02.2023, issued by the Rector of the Medical University - Varna. The presented materials - printed and digital - correspond to the Regulations of the University of Medicine - Varna. All documents are well-formed and correct.

### **Biographical data and career development of the candidate**

Teodora Yordanova Todorova graduated the Medical University - Plovdiv, specialty "Midwifery", Educational Qualification Degree "Bachelor" in 2009. She completed the Major of "Healthcare Management" at the Medical University - Plovdiv with a Master's degree in 2015. Her professional activity began in 2009 and she worked until 2017 as a midwife in "Zdrave" MHAT, Velingrad. From 2015 to 2017 she worked as a midwife at the "Razvitie" Center - Velingrad. Since 2018 up to now, she has been an assistant at the Department of "Health Care" in the Shumen Branch of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna. In 2022 she acquired a "Public Health" specialty at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna. As an assistant, she has actively developed her knowledge participating in more than 30 trainings and courses related to her scientific interests. She is a member of the Bulgarian Association of the Healthcare Professionals, the Bulgarian Association of Public Health and the European Association of Public Health. She has got 9 scientific publications and has participated in international and national forums.

### **General characteristics of the dissertation work**

This dissertation is presented in a total volume of 182 standard pages. It consists of an introduction, five chapters, a bibliography and 6 appendices. The research data is profoundly illustrated by 50 figures and 12 tables, which establishes an accessible and easily readable

dissertation work foundation. The bibliographic list includes 209 literary sources, 108 of which are in Cyrillic, 79 are in Latin and 22 are Internet sources.

### **Evaluation of the importance of the topic**

The presented dissertation work is an adequate response to a current problem related to the postponement of parenthood. Changing reproductive attitudes of people of childbearing age are associated with a number of demographic and medical matters. In order to solve them successfully and achieve effective results, it is necessary to actively involve midwives in the various levels of reproductive health prophylaxis.

### **Dissertation work evaluation**

**The first chapter** is a literature review on the subject and is presented on a total of 65 pages. The focus of the literature review enables the empirical study to be built on a deep, up-to-date and scientific theoretical base. At the beginning, a historical overview of the family structure in the period after the Liberation until the beginning of the transition in Bulgaria, cultural and religious concepts regarding marriage among ethnic groups in Bulgaria, marriage in Christianity and the Christian values and culture and other ethnic groups is made. The importance of the problem of delaying parenthood in economically developed countries and in countries with the least developed economy has been tracked and highlighted. The detailed description of the predisposing factors and consequences of postponing parenthood in our country is of a particular interest. The midwife's competencies in pregnancy planning are discussed.

**The second chapter** is dedicated to the methodology and organization of scientific research with its main parameters: goals, tasks, working hypotheses, object and subject of the research. The goal is clearly formulated, and the 7 tasks precisely define the logic of the research. The total scope of the logical units is 405 people, who are divided into five groups - female patients hospitalized in the Pathological Pregnancy Ward and the Maternity Ward (n=200); patients (female/male) in reproductive medicine centers (n=100); experts (obstetricians and gynecologists, embryologists, senior midwives/nurses) (n=20); midwives/nurses (n=25) and student mothers (n=60). The presented criteria for the inclusion of people in the study makes it possible to collect reliable information.

Technical monitoring units are medical institutions in five cities: "MBAL-Shumen" AD - Shumen, MOBAL "Dr. Stefan Cherkezov" - Veliko Tarnovo, USBALAG "Selena" - Plovdiv, SBAGAL "Prof. Dr. D. Stamatov" EOOD - Varna, Medical Complex "Maychin Dom" - Varna, Medical Complex "Dr. Shterev" - Sofia, Medical Center "St. Ivan Rilski" - the town of Tutrakan, Medical Center "St. Ivan Rilski" - the town of Shumen and Branches of MU Varna, located in the cities of Shumen, Veliko Tarnovo and Sliven.

The plan of the study is presented comprehensively with a description of the stages, place and period of its implementation. In order to achieve the research goals and solve the pre-formulated tasks, an individual toolkit has been developed. Five questionnaires designed for the research target group and one questionnaire for conducting an in-depth interview with obstetrician-gynecologists and embryologists have been developed.

The well-described statistic data and the selected methods of analysis, which make it possible to reveal essential interrelationship and to draw statistically significant conclusions are impressive.

**In the third chapter**, the results and analyzes of her own studies are presented in detail. The PhD student demonstrates good analytical skills, interpretation of results and has presented data on the awareness of patients about reproductive health; on the clinical and socioeconomic reasons for delaying parenthood. Trust in the midwife; competencies of the midwife to overcome the reasons for delaying parenthood; motivation and demotivation of senior and rank-and-file midwives/nurses for their work in the MDC; the challenges for patients in the MDC have been observed. The change in the direction of the medical services sought by the patients in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention according to the opinion of the AG-specialists and the influence of the pandemic situation on the birth rate are presented. In the course of the research, the attitudes and readiness of female student-mothers from the specialty "Midwife" and "Nurse" for the prevention of reproductive health have been studied.

**In the fourth chapter** of the dissertation, practical approaches to prevent late parenthood are presented, through the proposed model for the provision of autonomous midwifery care, aimed at training and advisory activity in an organizational form - Midwifery Center for Support of Expectant Parents (ACPBR). Educational materials have been developed for different age groups: an information brochure on health education for students aged 11-14 and a Handbook for couples with reproductive problems.

**Conclusions, recommendations and contribution** – The formulated scientific contribution reflect the significance of the work presented. The presented analysis of the literary sources, affecting the demographic characteristics in Bulgaria, in particular the birth rate; the study of the factors suggesting the postponement of parenthood in women and men of childbearing age are important contribution with a scientific-theoretical nature.

Four contributions with a scientific and practical nature have been formulated. The most significant practical-applied contribution is: the developed innovative model for the provision of autonomous midwifery care, through educational and advisory activities in an organizational form - ACPBR; the developed information brochure for health education of students from 11-14 years. and A Handbook for Couples with Reproductive Problems.

The dissertation ends with seven main conclusions and four substantive recommendations, which are directed to the responsible institutions: the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Health Insurance Fund, the Medical Universities and the Bulgarian Association of Healthcare Professionals. The recommendations made would significantly contribute to increasing the awareness of young people about reproductive health and to expanding the opportunities to present autonomous obstetric care for the prophylaxis of reproductive health.

**The abstract** is written on a total of 77 pages, contains an overview of most of the main points in the dissertation and is formatted according to the requirements. The main results of the development are reflected in three publications, which in terms of content are fully related to the issues of the dissertation.

## CONCLUSION

The proposed dissertation work of Teodora Yordanova Todorova entitled: "Postponing parenthood - the midwife's role in overcoming the causes" is distinguished by the professional competence and the attitude of the author. The results achieved and the contribution made are essential proof of knowledge of the essence of the subject and the precisely selected methodology.

Due to the above, I believe that the dissertation work fully meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB and the Regulations of the University of Medicine - Varna.

Based on the complex evaluation of the dissertation work, I give my positive assessment and strongly support the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific major "Health Care Management" to assistant Teodora Yordanova Todorova.

10.04.2023

Worked out by:   
(Assoc.Prof.Tanya Paskaleva, Ph.D.)