

## STATEMENT

by Assoc. prof. **Katya Genova Eguruze, PhD**  
**Head of the Board of Nurses**  
**Department of Health Care**  
**Faculty of Public Health**  
**Medical University – Varna**

for the dissertation of **Jana Georgieva Pavlovska**

on the topic: **THE CONTINUING TRAINING OF THE MIDWIFER - INNOVATIVE  
EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES**

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

By Order No. R-109-277/31.07.2020 of the Rector of the Medical University - Varna, I was elected a member of the Scientific Jury, and on the basis of Protocol No. 1/03.08.2020 I was appointed to prepare an opinion on procedure for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" of **Jana Georgieva Pavlovska**.

### **Details of the procedure**

Jana Georgieva Pavlovska is enrolled as a doctoral student in an independent form of education in the specialty "Health Care Management" with Order No. R-109-556/19.09.2018 of the Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov"- Varna, in the primary unit organizing the training: Department of Health Care, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University - Varna. Pursuant to Order No. R-109-115/12.03.2019, a protocol for successfully passing the doctoral minimum exam was presented. Based on the decision of the departmental council of the Department of Health Care, Faculty of Public Health, regarding readiness for public defense before the Scientific Jury, Jana Georgieva Pavlovska was approved with the right to defense by Order No. R-109-277/31.07.2020 of the Rector of the Medical University - Varna.

### **Brief biographical data about the doctoral student**

Jana Georgieva Pavlovska was born on December 10, 1961. In 1983 she graduated from Institute for Health Training "Dr. Nencho Nikolaev" in Varna, majoring in Midwifery. In 2000 she acquired a bachelor's degree in Health Care at the Higher Medical Institute in Pleven. Following the continuous pursuit of professional development in 2007 he completed a master's program "Health Care Management" at MU - Pleven.

Jana Pavlovska began her professional career in 1983 as a midwife in the Branch Polyclinic in the village of Resen, district Veliko Tarnovo, and in the period 1987 - 1994 she continued working in the Neonatology Department, and later in the Gynecology Department at Multi-profile United Hospital for Active Treatment "Dr. St. Cherkezov "AD, Veliko Tarnovo. After successfully passing competitions, she held the position of "Senior Midwife" in the Gynecology Department (1995 - 2010), and then in Obstetrics and Gynecology Department (2011 - 2015) at Multi-profile United Hospital for Active Treatment "Dr. St. Cherkezov "AD, Veliko Tarnovo.

From 2015 to the present he is an assistant in the Veliko Tarnovo branch of the Medical University - Varna.

She has taken part in 21 conferences and scientific forums in Bulgaria and 3 abroad, there are many publications, most of which are related to improving the skills of midwives. She has participated in a number of courses for continuing education and to increase the level of English language proficiency. Founder of the First Free School for Parents at Obstetrics and Gynecology Department, Veliko Tarnovo.

#### **General description of the dissertation**

The dissertation is presented in a volume of 189 pages and is structured in five main chapters. Includes 69 figures, 8 tables and 6 annexes.

The bibliographic list includes 205 literature sources, of which 96 in Cyrillic, 67 in Latin and 42 Internet addresses.

#### **Relevance and significance of the topic**

The topic of continuing education in the field of healthcare, which originated in the 1960s, continues to be discussed today. Continuing education is part of a person's lifelong learning and is related to his needs to increase professional knowledge and skills. Bulgaria's accession to the European Union has necessitated changes in all areas of education, with changes in the continuing education of medical professionals. Highly specialized and specific activities have been introduced in modern medical practice, which require continuous training of midwives. Of particular importance for the provision of quality obstetric care is the continuous improvement of the professional qualification of health care professionals.

In this sense, the topic of this dissertation is extremely relevant because the purpose of continuing education is to support the professional development and career development of midwives and to ensure the alignment of her professional competencies with European strategies, policies and practices.

#### **Characteristics and evaluation of the structure of the dissertation**

The dissertation "Continuing Education of Midwives - Innovative Educational Approaches" fully meets all the requirements for precise and in-depth research for this type of



research. The dissertation is structured in five chapters. The abbreviations used are presented at the beginning of the dissertation, which facilitates reading.

Chapter One "**Literary Review**" is structured in nine parts, which consistently and in-depth follow the main aspects that are relevant to the research problem studied by the doctoral student. The analysis of precisely selected scientific information is competently focused on the needs of the specific research.

Assist. Jana Pavlovska very skilfully and comprehensively presents the interpretations of continuing education in scientific, applied literature and practice in different countries, which brings clarity to the subject. Approaches for evaluating the results of such training are presented.

The in-depth analysis of the educational and organizational aspects in the continuing education of the regulated profession "Midwife" in Bulgaria gives grounds for the doctoral student to note that they contribute to maintaining and developing specific professional qualifications that increase the quality of obstetric care.

A comprehensive review of the continuing education of midwives has been carried out in 30 European countries, 27 of which belong to the European Union and three countries are part of the Schengen area.

The literature review concludes with conclusions that prove the importance and relevance of the dissertation.

Chapter Two "**Methodology of the dissertation**" is developed in detail and includes: purpose, tasks, hypotheses, organization, tools and research methods. A glossary of terms is presented, the purpose of which is to clarify the basic concepts used in the work.

The purpose of the dissertation is clearly and specifically defined. Eight tasks for achieving the goal have been presented, covering all aspects of the research work performed by Jana Pavlovska. Three working hypotheses are formulated.

The organization of the study is correctly described and includes: object, volume, logical units, technical units of the study.

The stages of the research work are presented in detail, in tabular form, reflecting specific activities, venue, period of implementation and tools used. The research methods are successfully selected by the author, adequate to achieve the goal and guarantee the reliability of the results. The tools developed in structural and content plan are consistent with the specifics of gathering information in each of the four groups of respondents (midwives, students majoring in "Midwife", experts - heads of health care and habilitated teachers). In order to guarantee the reliability and correct work with the questionnaires and the questionnaire, for the most part the research was conducted personally by the doctoral student.

The data were processed with IBM Statistics - SPSS for Windows, ver. 19. The statistical methods are precisely selected. MS Excel was used for graphical analysis.

Chapter Three "**Results and Discussion**" presents the results of the survey, after statistical processing. The results are structured and logically shaped into several subsections.

At the beginning, the doctoral student makes a socio-demographic description of the studied groups.



The opinion of the midwives in connection with the continuing education was studied.

Most of them are aware of the importance of continuing education in connection with the implementation of their direct competencies, and as a leading motive point to the expansion of knowledge and skills.

About  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the surveyed midwives are motivated to participate in the forms of continuing education in order to better professional realization. To improve their skills, midwives most often attend courses followed by theoretical and practical seminars, and their participation in organized scientific forums is relatively lower. According to midwives, the most important application of what is learned from continuing education helps to plan quality care for pregnant women, parturients and newborns.

The students in the specialty of Midwifery with a relatively high percent show a positive attitude towards continuing education. Their motives for this are: increasing and maintaining professional competence, career development, personal self-improvement, better realization on the labor market, achieving financial security and the opportunity for independent practice. Approximately half of the surveyed students intend to obtain a higher education degree, and a significant proportion of them wish to acquire a specialty.

The opinion of the heads of health care about the continuing education of midwives was also studied, as most of them have a positive attitude to the topic. Managers emphasize the importance of continuing education for quality obstetric care, opportunities for professional advancement and raising the prestige of the profession. The need to include patient and staff safety in the subject of training is not yet well understood.

Highly specialized and specific activities are constantly introduced in the modern healthcare system, for which it is necessary to build additional, specific knowledge and skills acquired through specialization. From the results obtained, it is noteworthy that most health care managers still underestimate the importance of specialization for employees, and it is directly related to the autonomous care that the midwife can provide within its competence.

Analyzing the results obtained, Assistant Jana Pavlovska emphasizes that the shortage of midwives forces employers to hire staff without requiring additional qualifications for positions such as anesthesiology and surgical midwife. The training of the assigned staff is compensated by several short-term courses. There are no incentives to motivate midwives to engage in continuing education, there is no feedback on the satisfaction and personal preferences of midwives related to training.

A SWOT analysis of the state of continuing education of midwives in Bulgaria was made on the basis of studied normative documents and the results obtained from the opinions of all groups of respondents.

Chapter Four focuses on **innovative approaches to assessing continuing education**. An *Algorithm for effective management of continuing education* has been developed, including five main steps that the training goes through in order to lead to the desired quality results. The doctoral student has developed and proposes a *Model for assessment of continuing education*, in which the assessment focuses on the degree of fulfillment of the requirements for the



professional development of the midwife. A Toolkit for the instruments of continuing education has been proposed. These innovative approaches will help increase the awareness and motivation of the class for more active involvement in continuing education. Through her research, Assistant Pavlovska proves the need to introduce established quality standards for continuing education.

Chapter Five "**Conclusions, Recommendations and Contributions**" sets out specific conclusions and recommendations that logically follow from the previous analysis. 8 conclusions are formulated, which accurately reflect the obtained results and show compliance with the purpose and objectives of the presented dissertation.

The recommendations made to the Bulgarian Association of Healthcare Professionals and to employers are convincing and have a specific bearing on the issue under consideration.

The contributions in the dissertation are of theoretical and practical nature, which I accept.

Contributions of indisputable practical nature are the developed *Algorithm for effective management of continuing education; Continuing Education Assessment Model and Toolkit, including: Midwifery Professional Development Assessment Card and Professional Portfolio.*

In connection with the dissertation, the doctoral student presented four full-text publications, two of which - in specialized journals and two - in a collection of national forums, specifically related to the topic of the dissertation.

**The abstract** is prepared according to the requirements and reliably reflects the content of the dissertation.

#### **Conclusion**

The dissertation is distinguished by its relevance, precision, high scientific and practical value.

I believe that it meets all the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for implementation of the law and the Rules of the MU - Varna.

The dissertation shows that Assistant Jana Pavlovska has in-depth theoretical training and professional skills that prove her good opportunities for research work.

Based on the above, I give my **positive vote** and convincingly propose to the esteemed Scientific jury, to award the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**" to **Jana Georgieva Pavlovska in the specialty "Health Care Management"**.

09.09.2020

Varna

  
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Assoc. prof. Katya Genova, PhD