

To the Scientific Secretary of MU-Varna

STATEMENT

From

Assoc. Prof. Iliya Ilkov Karagyozov, MD, PhD

MU-Pleven

External member of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order No.

P-109-406/25.10.2022 of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna

Regarding: Postdoctoral thesis on

Enhanced Recovery after Surgery (ERAS – Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Protocol) in Gynecologic Surgery

Author: Assoc. Prof. Stanislav Hristov Slavchev, MD, PhD

For awarding the educational and scientific degree Doctor of Science (DSc) in the professional division 7.1. Medicine, scientific specialty Obstetrics and Gynecology, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Medical University – Varna.

I. Academic and career profile of Assoc. Prof. Slavchev, MD, PhD

Assoc. Prof. Slavchev, MD, PhD, acquired his Master's degree in Medicine at the Medical University of Varna in 1996. After graduation, until 1999, he worked as a physician at the Emergency Medical Services in the city of Dulgopol. From 1999 until 2008, he was an attending physician at the Resuscitation Unit of the Emergency Department at St. Anna Hospital – Varna. Since 2004, he has

specialized in gynecology at the Gynecology Clinic at St. Anna Hospital – Varna. Since 2008 until now, he has been an obstetrician-gynecologist in the same clinic. In 2009, he obtained his Certificate of completion of special training in Obstetrics and gynecology. His doctoral thesis on *The role of radical hysterectomy with pelvic and/or aortic lymph node dissection for optimal cytoreductive surgery in advanced-stage epithelial ovarian cancer* earned him a doctoral (PhD) degree in 2016.

His academic development and tutoring academic performance go through the following stages: from 09/2011 to 09/2015 – an Assist. Prof. at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, MU-Varna, in the specialty Obstetrics and Gynecology; from 2012 to 2015 he researched his doctoral thesis while still working at St. Anna; from 2016 to 2018, Slavchev was a part-time assistant professor at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, MU-Varna, later on (from April 2018 to December 2019) he became Ch. Assist. Prof. at the same department. Since December 2019 to the present, St. Slavchev has been an Associate Professor at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, specialty in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

II. Relevance of the thesis subject

ERAS protocols in gynecology, particularly, in gynecologic oncology, have been introduced in the routine practice of most clinics worldwide. The purpose of this complex of measures in the perioperative period is to reduce the stress on the body from the surgical trauma and the pathophysiological processes associated with it, thereby speeding up the postoperative recovery and shortening hospital stay. In Bulgaria, until now, no data related to the applicability, compliance, and perioperative outcomes resulting from employing the elements of the ERAS protocol have been reported. As such, Assoc. Prof. Slavchev's thesis is an up-to-date, original, and innovative scientific research.

III. Thesis structure

The thesis is written on 152 pages and illustrated with 7 tables and 16 figures. The literature review is 25 pages and examines the current state of science regarding the individual elements of the ERAS protocol in surgical gynecology. The amount of bibliographic references is impressive – the bibliographic sources cited by the author in the literature review and the discussion of results are 432 sources. The thesis aims "To assess the applicability and positive effects of the ERAS protocol in surgical gynecology by auditing and reporting perioperative outcomes." The aim is clearly defined and corresponds to the thesis subject. To achieve his goal, Prof. Slavchev sets himself 11 tasks. The clinical cohort includes prospectively 121 patients operated on at the Gynecology Clinic at St. Anna Hospital – Varna from July 1st, 2020, to June 30th, 2022. The methodology of the study is described in detail so that it can be standardized and applied in other centers as well. The measures and elements of the protocol throughout the perioperative period are presented in chronological order: the day before surgery, the day of surgery, and the postoperative few days. Activities on the day of surgery are divided into those before, during, and after the operation.

The "Own results and discussion" section occupies 55 pages. The reported results are presented according to the stated tasks and objectives. The discussion is very comprehensive, with references to current publications of other authors. This section is the most essential part of the thesis. It demonstrates comprehensive solutions to the tasks, thus achieving the research objectives.

The thesis summary is prepared following the requirements and accurately reflects the parts of the thesis.

Publications and participation in congresses: Assoc. Prof. Slavchev has presented 10 thesis-related printed publications, of which he is the first author, and two thesis-related reports delivered by him at the National Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

IV. Evaluation of the conclusions and contributions of the postdoctoral researcher

Assoc. Prof. Slavchev's thesis bring to an end 11 conclusions, which fully correlate with the set tasks and aggregate his research to completion. I consider the conclusions related to the algorithm for limiting wound infections and complications from the surgical wound, the prevention of postoperative intestinal obstruction, and the specific recommendations for a minimum hospital stay after various surgical interventions as highly useful for the daily practice. There are eight contributions, mainly of an applied/practical nature, highlighted by the author. I consider contributions 3, 7, and 8 to be highly significant.

V. Conclusion

The postdoctoral thesis developed by Assoc. Prof. Stanislav Slavchev, MD, PhD, on "Enhanced Recovery after Surgery (ERAS – Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Protocol) in Gynecologic Surgery," is a valuable, up-to-date, innovative, and in-depth scientific research fully meeting the criteria for obtaining the Doctor of Sciences degree according to the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Rules and Regulations for its implementation at MU-Varna.

Based on the above, I express my positive opinion for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" to Assoc. Prof. Stanislav Hristov Slavchev, MD, PhD.

23.11.2022

Assoc. Prof. Ilija Ilkov Karagyozov, MD, PhD

