

STANDPOINT

by

Assoc. Prof. PETAR TSANKOV MARKOV, PhD

obstetrician-gynecologist at

Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital, Sofia

External member of the science jury

according to order: P – 109-153/14.04.2022

In the field of higher education 7. "Health and sports", professional direction 7.1 "Medicine" and scientific specialty "Obstetrics and Gynecology"

on the dissertation:

**GENITOURINARY SYNDROME OF MENOPAUSE IN WOMEN AFTER HORMONAL,
SURGICAL OR POST-RADIATION CASTRATION**

by

Dr PAVEL PETROV DOBREV

Regarding procedure:

All the regulations of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the regulations for its implementation in Varna Medical University for the acquisition of a scientific degree "Doctor" have been met.

I. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation contains 122 pages, including 15 figures, 21 tables and a questionnaire. 167 literary sources are cited, 16 of which are in Cyrillic and 151 are in Latin languages.

The work includes the following sections: literature review, purpose and objectives, material and methods, results and discussion, deductions, conclusion, contributions and bibliography.

Dr Dobrev has formulated 8 tasks and studied a significant contingent of 67 patients, completed 9 conclusions, on the basis of which he has made relevant recommendations and contributions.

II. Relevance of the dissertation

Genitourinary syndrome related with hormonal deficiency is a complex of urological, sexual manifestations and a general vulvo-vaginal discomfort, which can significantly impair the patients' quality of life and relate with their psychological instability. The doctor-patient communication in these cases is very sensitive and difficult which can lead to hypodiagnosics and a tendency for

underestimation of the significance of this problem. Although the condition is typical and predominantly characteristic for the postmenopausal population, there are a number of cases in which it will develop in young patients for different reasons. In these cases, the severity of the symptoms and their subjective reflection on the quality of life are more apparent. The most common reasons for hormonally deficient genitourinary syndrome in young patients are iatrogenic i.e. hypoestrogenism induced by application of medicines, radiation or surgery. Dr Dobrev's dissertation focuses precisely on this contingent of young patients with oncological diseases which require castration by hormonal, radiation or surgical procedures. This inevitably leads to development of urinary symptoms, vulvo-vaginal discomfort, dryness, dyspareunia and other sexual distress, low self-esteem, loss of libido, depression, etc. The practical difficulties in the discussion and diagnosis of this syndrome, as well as the inadequate information for doctors and for patients logically leads to general ignorance of the problem.

Therefore, in this context, the benefits of such a scientific work are even more clearly outlined, especially when it is well-objectified, sufficiently detailed and evidence-based, as in this case.

III. Analysis of the dissertation

In his study Dr Dobrev aims to investigate the incidence and different manifestations of the syndrome of genitourinary atrophy after surgical or medication induced (hormonal and chemotherapeutic) castration.

The survey is prospective, completed in 2021 and comprises a contingent of 67 patients in 30-45 years of age, divided into two groups. One group (52.2%) underwent surgical castration, while the other group (47.8%) had medication induced menopause. Both groups are almost of equal size. The main oncological diseases which are the reason for the therapeutically induced iatrogenic menopause are breast cancer, cervical cancer and ovarian cancer.

A comparative analysis was made about the application of the two types of therapy, using the appropriate statistical methods.

The study results show that in all cases there is a development of different complications related with genitourinary syndrome in young patients who underwent therapy for oncological disease leading to cessation of ovarian function (hypoestrogenism). Surgical castration is related with more frequent and more severe symptoms like: alkalization of the vaginal pH, dryness, dyspareunia, nycturia, stress-incontinence.

Based on these results, the author concludes that the two most important oncological conditions which can affect young women with preserved ovarian function are cervical cancer and breast cancer. Patients with surgical castration (bilateral adnexectomy) have more severe symptoms of genitourinary syndrome and more impaired quality of life. That's why, the author proposes for a stimulation of the directives for ovarian sparing surgical procedures in cases of cervical and breast cancer in young patients.

The applied contributions objectify the value of the research in which numerous studies are made for the first time in Bulgaria.


Dr Dobrev has submitted three publications related to the dissertation.

IV. Conclusion

The dissertation work of Dr Pavel Dobrev represents an excellent completed research on a significant but frequently underestimated problem, related to the development and consequences of genitourinary syndrome in young patients with iatrogenic menopause after therapy for oncological disease. This work has the necessary qualities - significance, scope, originality and thoroughness which makes the author worthy of acquiring the scientific degree "Doctor".

On the basis of the above, in accordance with our national and European criteria for quantity and quality, I recommend to the honorable members of the scientific jury to approve the dissertation work of Dr Pavel Petrov Dobrev, and to vote positively for his award with the scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 7. "Health and sports", professional direction 7.1 "Medicine" and scientific specialty "Obstetrics and Gynecology".

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/ Assoc. Dr Peter Markov, MD /