

OPINION

By Assoc. prof. Maria Dimova MD, PhD

regarding

PhD work in the specialty "Internal Medicine", professional field 7.1 Medicine, field of university education 7. Health and Sports

PhD student: Dr. Svetoslav Pavlov Dimitrov, PhD student in individual plan, scientific specialty "Internal Medicine", enrolled by order № R-109-123 / 12.03.2020 in Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, MU - "Prof. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

1. General presentation of the procedure

PhD work in the specialty "Internal Medicine", professional field 7.1 Medicine, field of university education 7. Health and Sports, in accordance with the Order № P - 109-218 / 25.05.2022 of the Rector of Medical University "Prof. Dr Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna The presented set of materials on paper and electronic media is in accordance with the Procedure for acquisition of PhD at MU - Varna.

2. Brief biographical reference

Dr. Svetoslav Pavlov Dimitrov was born in 1983 in the city of Varna. He graduated with honors from the Fifth High Language School "Joahn Exarch", Varna in 2002. He graduated with honors from the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna in 2008. and was awarded the Golden Hippocrates Prize and the option for choosing specialization. He started working as an intern in Rheumatology at the Clinic of Rheumatology at the University Hospital "St. Marina", Varna in 2008. He was a part-time assistant professor in Rheumatology at the Department of Cardiology and Rheumatology 2011-2013. In 2013

after winning a competition he was appointed as a fulltime assistant-professor in Rheumatology at the Department of Cardiology and Rheumatology. In 2013 he acquired specialty in Rheumatology.

3. Relevance of the problem

Spondyloarthritis is a major branch of rheumatology. These include several diseases with similar clinical and genetic characteristics. In recent years, there has been tremendous progress in this area, both in terms of diagnosis options and the introduction and implementation of reliable treatment, thanks to which there is talk of remission and stopping the progression of the disease. From a modern point of view, the possibility of early diagnosis and adequate comprehensive care for the patient is the basis of success in terms of influencing the overall disease activity, maintaining physical function and quality of life. The following modern aspects in the field of spondyloarthritis stand out - the introduction of ASAS classification criteria in diagnosis, the widespread use of MRI of the joints and the new anticytokine and targeted therapy. The possibilities for adequate therapeutic care raises questions, such as the extent of the disease activity in the early phase, the extent to which the physical function of patients without structural radiographic changes is limited and their quality of life. The PhD work of Dr. Svetoslav Dimitrov is dedicated to these aspects related to the course of the earliest phase of axial spondyloarthritis.

4. Structure of the PhD work

The work I got acquainted with proves the existence of a clearly defined profile of scientific interests, specific scientific tasks and working hypotheses.

The PhD work is presented by 158 standard typewritten pages and includes 35 figures, 40 tables and 14 appendices. The dissertation includes all obligatory elements and has the following distribution of sections - introduction (2 pages), literature review (29 pages), purpose and tasks (2 pages), material and methods (9 pages), results (51 pages), discussion (13 pages) and conclusions and contributions (3 pages).

The bibliography contains 202 sources, most of the sources used are from the last 5-7 years. The abstract is created according to the requirements and consists of 92 standard pages, including 37 tables and 31 figures.

The literature review is detailed and extensive and is entirely topic-oriented. It covers all aspects of the given topic and logically presents the arguments for conducting the research. Shows the good scientific training and knowledge on the problem. **The purpose** of the dissertation is formulated specifically, clearly and precisely, and for its implementation are set **7 tasks**. The latter derive from the purpose and allow the comprehensive development of the study.

Material and methods. In the conditions of cross-sectional analysis, information was collected on the demographic characteristics, the laboratory and clinical disease activity, the physical function, the quality of life of the patients and the control group were assessed. An assessment of the changes from the performed MRI of the sacroiliac joints was made, according to the proposed scoring method. The number of enrolled patients with nr-ax SpA was 160 (subdivided into clinical and imaging arm according to ASAS classification criteria) and control group (n = 42). The number of observation units 202 is sufficient to perform statistical analyzes. All methods used in this study are described in detail. The statistical processing was performed with the generally accepted statistical analyzes, according to the possibilities.

The results in the dissertation are presented in 51 pages and follow the sequence of tasks. They are presented systematically, they are illustrated with figures, and there is no overlap of the information that the latter presents. The author comments analytically on the results obtained, and in the **discussion section** (represented by 13 pages), compares with the data presented by other researchers, where possible.

The formulated **8 conclusions** correspond to the results and cover the overall aspect of the scientific work.

The PhD student indicated 10 contributions, divided into two groups equally - contributions of a confirmatory nature (5) and contributions of an original nature (5). As a kind of continuation of the presented conclusions, the author has proposed an algorithm for early detection of non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis. I believe that this algorithm would find its place in everyday

clinical practice, would facilitate diagnostic thinking in the direction of spondyloarthritis and further increase the value of the dissertation.

5. Assessment of the publications and personal contribution

The PhD student has presented 4 full-text publications in Bulgarian journals. He is the first author of three of them. He has participated in 3 scientific forums related to the dissertation, and is the first author of all of them.

6. Abstract

The content and quality of the abstract corresponds to the scientific work and is made according to the requirements of MU - Varna. It reflects the main results achieved in the Phd work, the conclusions and the contributions.

CONCLUSION

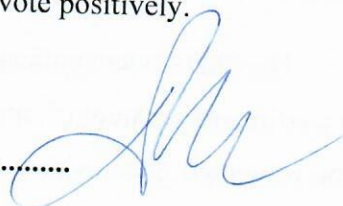
The dissertation I got acquainted with shows that the PhD student Dr. Svetoslav Dimitrov has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills. He demonstrates qualities and abilities for conducting scientific research independently. The dissertation contains scientific and applicable results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of MU - Varna.

All the above gives me the reason to strongly support Dr. Svetoslav Pavlov Dimitrov, believing that there is every reason to award him educational and scientific degree "PhD", as well as to recommend to the distinguished members of the scientific jury to vote positively.

30.06.2022r.

Varna

Signature:.....



/Assoc. prof. Maria Dimova, MD, PhD./