

STATEMENT

from

Assoc.Prof.dr. Dimitar Stefanov Karasatev, phd

Member of the scientific jury according to the order № P-109-198/ 16.03.2023 of the Rector of MU - Varna in the procedure for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**" by candidate Dr. Simona Bogdanova - Petrova, MU - Varna

The dissertation "**Pain as part of the rheumatologic manifestations of COVID-19 viral infection**" by Dr. Bogdanova-Petrova appears at very appropriate time, when all medical disciplines confronted with the COVID-19 infection proceed to evaluate the clinical manifestations, complications and prognosis of this infection..

Dr. Bogdanova - Petrova precisely defined the aim and objectives of the dissertation, with the original idea to assess the association between pain syndrome and anxiety and depressive symptoms of patients.

This dissertation is a single-center, observational, single-stage case/control study involving a large number of patients diagnosed with COVID-19 (234) and also a large control group (130) of patients.

Dr. Bogdanova-Petrova strictly followed all the requirements for inclusion and exclusion in the study and control groups. The control group includes patients with inflammatory joint diseases (IJD) on long-term anticytokine therapy. The author used visual analogue scales and self-rated depression and anxiety scales (Tsung scales).

The applied statistical methods make it possible to evaluate the pain syndrome according to many factors - age, gender, anxiety-depressive attitudes. The results of correlation of pain with the level of inflammatory markers in the study and control groups are interesting. The author rightly proposes that based on the severity of joint and muscle pain, may be formed a subgroups that need a specific treatment approach. Complex management of acute and chronic pain provided an opportunity for differentiated therapy in the study group and also for continuation of surveillance in some of the patients.

Dr. Boganova-Petrova outlines some shortcomings of the study, which allows for the formation of prospective long-term studies in some patients.

Publishing some of the results or debate issues in a timely manner during the course of the pandemic is very impressive. A considerable number of publications at home and abroad are related to the dissertation thesis.

Dr. Bogdanova - Petrova is an assistant professor with already wide clinical and pedagogical experience, with a variety of interests in the field of rheumatology, which in time has been influenced by the creative environment, the guidance of the scientific management and the collective efforts in the Clinic of Rheumatology at St. Marina Hospital.

I consider with absolute assurance that the dissertation presented by **Dr. Simona Bogdanova - Petrova** fulfills all the requirements for the granting of the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**".

I believe that the points made so far will also be supported by the other members of the esteemed scientific jury..

03.05.2023

Assoc.Prof. dr. Dimitar Karastatev, phd

