

## REVIEW

from Prof. Galina Stamova Tchaneva, PhD

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Appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury by Order No. R-109-555 dated 14.12.2023 of the Rector of the MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna

Regarding: Procedure for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" of Polina Ivanova Dragneva - doctoral student in full-time study

on the subject:

"Factors influencing the choice of pregnant women for elective operative delivery. Role of the midwife"

in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sports, professional direction  
7.4. Public Health, Health Care Management

The dissertation work, developed by Polina Dragneva, examines a very important problem of modern society, namely the study of the factors influencing the choice of pregnant women for elective delivery. According to the WHO, the rate of caesarean section should not exceed 12-15%. Given the higher risk to the life and health of the pregnant woman, a number of countries are looking for ways to identify the reasons why women choose to have a caesarean section without medical indications. The essential importance of the midwife's role in giving competent advice and educating women regarding the mode of birth and the right to make an informed choice should be emphasized. This is one of the strategic approaches that would contribute to the reduction of elective childbirth with all the resulting medical, social and financial consequences.

The dissertation is structured in 147 pages and includes: chapter one - Literature review; chapter two – methodology of the dissertation work; chapter three – results and discussion; chapter four - conclusions, contributions and recommendations. The results are graphically presented in 47 tables and 48 figures. Literary sources include 242, of which 56 are in Cyrillic and 186 in Latin.

The literature review describes the main terms related to childbirth. The doctoral student presents the historical aspects of operative delivery, as well as the medical indications for operative delivery. A comprehensive analysis of data on the prevalence of caesarean section in EU countries, the USA, Canada and our country was made. Authors are cited who have conducted research on the topic, analyzing biological, psychological, cultural and social factors. According to data from the European Perinatal Health Report for 2015, Bulgaria is one of the leading places for cesarean births with 43%. Thus, our country has the highest relative share of cesarean sections in Europe for 2015, with an average for Europe of 28%. Strategies to reduce the number of elective deliveries are presented, as the recommendations of the WHO regarding childbirth and the importance of prenatal preparation and awareness of women are described.

The goal is formulated clearly and concretely, corresponding to the topic chosen by the doctoral student. Six tasks have been defined, which are aimed at researching women's attitudes towards elective childbirth, their awareness, as well as the factors influencing the pregnant woman's decision-making.

The research methodology is thoroughly described. 4 hypotheses related to the topic of the dissertation have been formulated. Three groups of respondents were included in the study: pregnant women, midwives and midwifery students. The research was conducted with students from the Sliven Branch of the MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna and Veliko Tarnovo Branch of MU - Varna. The midwives and pregnant women included in the study are from "Dr. Ivan Seliminski" Hospital - Sliven, DKC - 2 EOOD, Third Polyclinic - Sliven, MBAL "Dr. Stefan Cherkezov" AD, Veliko Tarnovo, DKC-1 EOOD, Veliko Tarnovo. The scientific study was planned and carried out in three working stages with included deadlines and places for conducting the research activity.

The methods used are: documentary, sociological and statistical. Three survey cards have been developed for the survey of students, midwives and pregnant women. Statistical data processing was carried out by means of descriptive statistics, factor analysis, variation analysis, hypothesis testing methods, correlation analysis, which allow in-depth analysis of the collected information.

The results of the conducted research are presented graphically and analytically in the third chapter. The demographic characteristics of the subjects were investigated. An analysis was made of the opinion of the studied groups regarding the reasons for choosing an elective delivery. The data show that the leading factor in the choice of pregnant women for operative delivery is the psychological aspect - "fear of pain". Almost all of the pregnant women included in the study regularly attend a women's consultation. Regarding the pregnant women's self-assessment of the course of the pregnancy, 1/3 of the respondents indicated that "slight deviations" were observed during pregnancy, while the rest did not observe any deviations.

A scientific style and language was used to analyze the issue and to reveal the factors that influence the choice of elective delivery.

The obtained results are analyzed and synthetically presented in the well-formulated conclusions. The recommendations are aimed at social organizations, higher education institutions and specialized obstetric and gynecological hospitals.

The contributions of the dissertation are of a theoretical and practical nature:

- The factors related to the increasing rate of operative births in the country were studied, based on the opinion of pregnant women, midwives and midwifery students.

- The awareness of pregnant women, midwives and midwifery students regarding elective childbirth was analysed.

- An education module for pregnant women has been developed within antenatal courses, which informs expectant mothers about delivery methods, potential risks and complications of caesarean section.

- The leading role of the midwife in the preparation of the pregnant woman for a normal birth was defined, and an information brochure was developed, which is aimed at the psychological preparation of the woman for the upcoming birth and assisting her in making a decision.

Polina Dragneva is an assistant at the Sliven Branch of the MU "Prof. Dr. P.Stoyanov" - Varna since 2013. She graduated from OCS "Bachelor" majoring in "Midwifery" at the Faculty of Medicine of Thrakia University in 2015. In 2019, she graduated from the same university with a Master's degree in Healthcare Management. P.Dragneva's professional career as a midwife began at the AGO of the Hospital "Dr. Ivan Seliminski" in Sliven.

The abstract of the dissertation contains the main elements of the research conducted by the doctoral student. The results are graphically presented and thoroughly analyzed. Five publications related to the dissertation are presented, of which P. Dragneva is the first author.

My recommendation to the doctoral student is related to the appendix included in the dissertation work, where it is necessary to preserve the scientific style and nature of the presentation. All parts of the dissertation must reflect the scientific goals of the research activity.

In conclusion, I believe that the dissertation work developed by Polina Dragneva on the topic: "Factors influencing the choice of pregnant women for elective operative delivery. Role of the midwife" has contributions in terms of affirming the role of the midwife in the preparation and training of pregnant women for normal delivery. I give a positive assessment of the developed dissertation work and recommend to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to make a decision to award Polina Ivanova Dragneva an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.4. Public Health, Health Care Management.

02.02.2024

Reviewer:

Prof. G. Tchaneva, PhD

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