

STATEMENT

By Assoc. Prof. Kristin Grigorova-Petrova, PhD
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Member of a Scientific Jury, appointed with Ordinance № RD 38-301/07.07.2021 of the Rector of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Prof. Anastas Gerdjikov, Dr.

Regarding: Dissertation (PhD thesis) "Study on the effect of physiotherapy in students with musculoskeletal dysfunctions, overweight and obesity", developed by Gergana Georgieva Despotova, for acquisition of educational and scientific degree "doctor", Professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... (Methodology of training in physical education and sport – kinesitherapy)

I hereby declare that I have no conflict of interest and I have no co-authorship with Gergana Georgieva Despotova. The statement is based on the decision of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury, the submitted dissertation, abstract, publications related to the dissertation, CV, etc.

1. Relevance of the topic

In our country there is a persistent trend of high mortality, morbidity and disability due to a number of health risk factors. Low physical activity is one of the causes leading to deterioration in population health status, including in younger generations. The present dissertation addresses an important problem and provides a rationale and targeted application of physical activity and physiotherapy in combination with health education for both prevention and treatment of obesity, bad posture and scoliosis.

2. General characteristics of the dissertation

The dissertation is written on 194 pages, including bibliography, appendices, declarations, etc. The bibliographic reference includes 177 sources, 60 in Cyrillic, 111 in Latin and 6 websites. It is structured in several sections: Theoretical background, Aim, objectives, methodology and organization, Methodology of physiotherapy, Results and analysis,

Conclusions, Recommendations, Contributions and bibliography. It is illustrated with 38 tables and 16 figures.

The title accurately reflects the content of the dissertation, and all sections are comprehensively developed. The literature review is fully consistent with the topic and there is clarity and logic in the presentation. It demonstrates current and critically analyzed information on the etiology, epidemiology, treatment and prevention of overweight and obesity. At the end, a working hypothesis is clearly formulated, focusing on the desired effect of applying a combination of healthy lifestyle education, diet and specialized physiotherapy.

The aim is clearly formulated with five logically related tasks. The study is experimental in nature with properly selected research methods to monitor the effect. The statistical methods used are appropriate and allow qualitative analysis of the results obtained. The results are presented in tabular and graphical form and are correctly interpreted in the discussion.

Five conclusions, which follow the obtained results, are presented, clearly formulated and reflect the essence of the experiment.

3. Scientific contributions

I consider the following scientific-theoretical contributions in the doctoral thesis:

- Development of a theoretical lecture course aimed at increasing health literacy and health culture to promote a healthy lifestyle through physical activity.

I consider the following applied contributions:

- Development and validation of a physiotherapy protocol for students with overweight, obesity and musculoskeletal dysfunction

As confirmatory contributions the following can be pointed out:

- The relationship between the frequency, intensity and duration of structured physical activity and targeted physiotherapy to influence overweight and obesity is confirmed.
- The great health benefits and role of physiotherapy in socially significant diseases are confirmed.

Publications on the topic: the main part of the results are summarized and presented in four publications in Bulgarian (the PhD student is an independent author), related to the topic of the dissertation. All the publications are included in the National Reference List of Contemporary Bulgarian Peer-Reviewed Scientific Publications, which meets the minimum required points for publication activity. No signals for plagiarism and no signs of plagiarism have been reported.

Abstract: The abstract accurately and completely reflects the results and the conclusions of the study.

Conclusion:

Considering the great medical and social significance of the presented topic, I recommend Gergana Despotova to continue her activities for awareness and popularization of healthy lifestyle, as well as for expanding the practical application of physical activity and targeted physiotherapy, which would be in the interest and benefit of public health.

In conclusion, I believe that the dissertation demonstrates a thorough and rigorous study including the personal involvement of the doctoral candidate at every stage, and the materials and dissertation results presented fully comply with the legal and regulatory requirements for obtaining a doctoral degree.

All this gives me the reason for my positive assessment and to suggest to the Honorable Scientific Jury to award to Gergana Georgieva Despotova the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 1.3. (Methodology of Physical Education and Sport Education - Kinesitherapy).

September, 14th 2021

Sofia

Statement review prepared by:

/Assoc. Prof. Kristin Grigorova-Petrova, PhD/