

REVIEW
by Prof. Hristo Ruskov Hinkov dm,
of the works of
Ch. assistant Dr. Vladimir Venkov Nakov

presented for participation in the competition for "associate professor" in the field of higher education announced by the National Health and Safety Authority 7. "Health and Sports", professional direction 7.1. "Medicine", under "Social Medicine and Health Management", for the needs of the "Mental Health" department of the "Mental Health and Prevention of Addictions" Directorate - NCSOZA (Official Gazette No. 90 of 11.11.2022 d.)

Brief introduction of the candidate

Dr. Vladimir Venkov Nakov was born on 18.04.1973 in Pleven. He graduated from the Medical University in the city of Pleven in 1997. He obtained a specialty in psychiatry in 2002, and an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in 2015. From 2000 to 2005 he worked as a district psychiatrist in the municipal hospital of Levski, UMBAL City of Pleven - resident psychiatrist and consultant to the prison in Pleven-Kaylaka OZ. During the period 2006-2015, he worked in the City Dispensary for the Treatment of Mental Illnesses with an Inpatient Hospital - Sofia City, as well as in DKC XXVIII Sofia OOD. Since 2016, he has been working as a psychiatrist at the Avicena Medical Center in Sofia. From 2013-2018 he was a part-time assistant at the Neofit Rilski University of Blagoevgrad, and from 2016 he was a part-time assistant at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Department of "Primary and Preschool Pedagogy". Dr. Nakov is fluent in written and spoken English, excellent in Russian. Since 2007, he has been working at the National Center for Public Health and Analysis. He is currently the Chief Assistant and Head of the Mental Health Department at the Directorate of Mental Health and Addiction Prevention.

Review of works

- The candidate presents his works and scientific activity divided into the following groups:
- Dissertation work for the award of the scientific degree "Doctor"
- Scientific works related to the dissertation work 12 nos.
- Papers after the award of the scientific degree doctor 22 nos.
- Monograph and books: the candidate presents 1 monograph and two collective contributions to scientific books.
- Articles in foreign scientific journals 4 nos.
- Articles in Bulgarian scientific journals 8 nos.
- Articles in non-refereed editions with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes 11 nos.

Scientific activity.

- Participation and leadership in scientific projects – 8 nos.
- Participation in congresses, conferences and scientific meetings 28 of which 26 are of international format.

General evaluation of the candidate's activity

The presented report on the scientific contributions of the works covers the period from 1998 to 2022, including areas of a scientific, scientifically applied, clinical-diagnostic

and clinical-therapeutic nature. The scientific publications of the candidate follow the stages of his professional development, being related to his work in the psychiatry clinic of the MU-Pleven, psychiatric office - OB-Levski, OSKP at the psychiatry clinic of the MU-Pleven, KNO-TCPZ-Sofia city, DCC-XXVIII and National Center for Public Health and Analysis from 2007 to the present. His scientific works, participation in numerous conferences as an invited speaker are presented. Winner of the best e-poster award of the European Psychiatric Association. In the presented detailed reference for the publications, presentations and participation in scientific meetings in this field, a wide range of topics related to clinical-diagnostic problems can be found. Dr. Nakov has a book and a monograph on suicides in Bulgaria, participation in two collective monographs, publications in journals with a high impact factor, numerous citations with Hirsch factor 5.

Quantitative criteria

According to the minimum requirements for awarding the scientific degree associate professor according to indicator 1, the candidate has the required number of points -50 for a defended dissertation on the topic "Epidemiological study of suicide attempts in the Republic of Bulgaria"

According to indicator 2 "Habilitation work - monograph", the candidate has submitted the monograph "Suicides in Bulgaria Historical Context. Current data", Plovdiv, Niton, 2022, p. ; ISBN: 978-954-347-105-8 which meets the 100 point requirement.

According to indicator 5, the candidate has published a book based on a protected dissertation for the award of an educational and scientific degree "doctor in co-authorship with a second author "Suicides in Bulgaria 2009-2013" Vladimir Nakov, Tony Donchev Military Medical Academy, Sofia 2015, ISBN 978-619 -7196-04-7 which brings him 40 t.

According to indicator 6 - "Articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information", the presented publications are 12 of which 7 are in Bulgarian and 5 in foreign publications, all after obtaining a doctorate degree. The total number of points for this indicator is 169.03.

According to indicator 7 "Articles and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes" a total of 11 publications are presented, of which 3 are in English and 8 are in Bulgarian. The candidate's independent publications on this indicator are 4. The total number of points calculated on this indicator is 161.79.

According to a reference from NACID, the journals with an impact factor in which the candidate has publications are a total of 8 with an average impact factor of 4.325 (five journals have an impact factor above 5 and around 5, two are around 4 and 3 and only one is below one).

Citations in scientific publications referenced and indexed in the world database are a total of 143 according to a report presented by NACID, of which 103 in journals with an impact factor above and around 4, some with 200 (The Lancet) others with 25, 11 and 10. According to this indicator, the candidate collects 2145 points.

The candidate has an acquired medical specialty (40 points), one participation in a national scientific project (15 points) and 5 participations in international scientific projects (100 points). According to indicator 20, he has two guides of international scientific projects, which brings him 80 points.

The total number of points calculated on the basis of the evidence presented by the candidate is 2860.82, which is well above the minimum requirements of 400 points for the academic position "docent".

Quality criteria
Evaluation of research activity
Scientific articles

Dr. Nakov has presented evidence of scientific developments in various areas of social and clinical psychiatry, which speaks of wide scientific interest. The topics are related to the organization of mental health services, clinical problems of depression and anxiety, as well as historical aspects in the development of psychiatric services in Bulgaria, covering a period of more than half a century. In total, the articles in various scientific refereed and non-refereed journals are 43, 21 of which are before the acquisition of the scientific degree "doctor" and 22 after it.

In the clinical field, Dr. Nakov has shown serious scientific potential, both in theoretical and applied aspects (publications (4), (5), (6) and (11) from the list of scientific works submitted by the candidate). Other studies co-authored by other researchers are related to the epidemiological aspects of the problem of common mental disorders and in particular depression and anxiety disorders (publications (2), (7,) (17), (26) of the same list). A third group of studies is devoted to organizational aspects in the care of these disorders (publications (2), (8) (18), (19), (22), (23), (24), (27) and (28) of the list).

The greatest scientific interest, however, which can be traced through a large part of the publications, the candidate showed to the problem of suicides. The articles related to this problem, in which Dr. Nakov participated independently or in co-authorship with other researchers, together with two monographs on the topic, are the focus of the entire scientific activity of the candidate (publications (3), (9), (10) (12) , (13) (20), (14) and (15) from the list). This interest was already shown in the dissertation on the epidemiology of suicides in Bulgaria.

Subsequent posts after the defense have largely developed this theme. Thus, publications related to depression and anxiety are organically woven into the development, justification and understanding of the suicidal topic as the main leading topic in the candidate's scientific interest. A logical development in this direction is also observed in the presented monograph, in which the topic of suicides in Bulgaria is developed in depth, touching on the philosophical and historical layers of this problem, as well as its placement in the Bulgarian context.

I'll go into a bit more detail on that here. It is obvious that the monographs on the topic of suicide in Bulgaria are counted on the fingers, regardless of the sustainability of this phenomenon, which, among other things, also has periodic manifestations such as limited epidemiological explosions outside the constant level of suicide attempts and completed suicides. Probably the reasons for the relatively scarce epidemiological studies on this issue are due to a number of factors such as stigma, conjunctural political thinking, lack of reliable statistical information, inertia of scientific thinking, etc.

The topic of suicides was insufficiently researched in the second half of the twentieth century in our country, or it was addressed sporadically and due to ideological reasons and insufficient publicity of this phenomenon. Despite the fact that already at the end of the last century some attention was paid to this issue, mainly as a result of the initiative of one or two researchers at that time, a sustainable practice for processing the collected information on suicide attempts as well as a methodology for this is lacking.

It was only in 2009 that the National Center for Public Health and Analysis began to process information on suicide attempts (realized or not), received by the District Health Inspections by virtue of an order of the Minister from the end of the century. This information includes methods, demographic characteristics, motivation, methods, etc. The collected database provides a unique opportunity to defend a dissertation on this topic, which is one of

the few scientific studies in the past years. In support of this is the built portal for registration of suicide attempts in Bulgaria by region, in the construction of which Dr. Nakov had a significant contribution and which turned out to be unique for a number of European countries, especially with regard to the statistics of unfulfilled suicide attempts.

In this sense, the developments of Dr. Nakov on this topic have a really serious scientific contribution not only for Bulgaria, but also for other European countries, given the fact that the methodology of data collection, as well as their processing, is unique.

Monographs

In the three monographs presented, the candidate is an independent author in one of them - (14), and in the other two he is a co-author - (15) and (16). Two of the monographs are devoted to the historical aspects of suicides in Bulgaria, one covering a four-year period from 2009 to 2013, and the other being an independent study by the candidate covering a historical period in Bulgaria from the Liberation to the present day. The third monograph is dedicated to the problems related to the use of marijuana for medical purposes and is the result of a collective study of this issue in response to a task set by the Ministry of Health. For me, however, it is the second monograph that is the candidate's most significant research, and I will dwell on it in a little more detail.

The monograph has a volume of 183 pages with numerous illustrations, tables and graphs. It consists of 6 chapters and two appendices. The bibliographic reference is of 200 titles.

The first chapter examines in detail the historical aspects of the problem of suicide - from the deepest antiquity to the present day.

The second chapter traces the history of collecting information on suicide attempts from the Liberation to 2018.

The third chapter is devoted to the problems of suicide attempts in late life, the relationship between pathological and "normal psychological" suicide, as the author directs his research interest to the problem of the ideologisation of the phenomenon of suicide and examines the problem of the motivation of the suicide in various aspects of internal motivation and external stimuli in the middle.

The fourth chapter deals with the classification of suicides and the risk factors provoking such behavior. An important part of this chapter is child suicide and organizational activities to prevent suicidal behavior. Here is the place to insert that the availability of the mentioned database of suicide attempts that did not end fatally is an important guide for preventive measures, taking into account the types of risk factors and the methods used.

The fifth chapter describes the principles of mass communication of suicide attempts, which is based on WHO recommendations and the accumulated experience of the team in which Dr. Nakov works in connection with the series of self-immolations in our country ten years ago.

The last chapter further develops the topic of risk factors, from the point of view of the methodology of collecting information from the portal for suicide attempts developed by the NCOSA team.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance of this monograph from a theoretical and practical point of view, as well as its role for a deeper approach to this phenomenon which, according to statistical data, takes an average of about 800 lives in Bulgaria and creates a number of problems for saving the remaining survivors from such an experience about 3000 people a year.

Reports, presentations, posters

Dr. Nakov has presented a reference for 15 communications, abstracts and posters in various journals and scientific meetings.

Authorship

In the analyzed articles, Dr. Nakov is the sole author in 7 of them, apart from the independent monograph. He is the first author in 7 articles. In 4 of the articles with international participation, the results of international studies of very large groups are presented, in which, according to the names of the countries and in alphabetical order, Dr. Nakov is not among the first authors. In them, however, the data for Bulgaria are provided, presented and analyzed with his participation, which practically makes him an independent author at the national level. In this sense, Dr. Nakov definitely has the qualities of an independent researcher, having proven and recognized abilities to carry out and lead studies, both in Bulgarian and international teams.

Assessment of scientific activity

Dr. Nakov presented a report on 118 certificates and certificates for participation in various scientific formats in the country and abroad. He participated in 26 international congresses. Has been a regular contributor to the Minister of Health's Mental Health Annual Citizens Health Reports since 2014.

Participation in research projects.

Dr. Nakov has participated in projects to evaluate the rights of patients with mental illnesses as an expert, evaluation of institutions for long-term accommodation of persons with mental illnesses, participates as a state expert in the field of dementia at the international level, in various working groups and expert councils (on anti-doping, on matters of application of the FCPA, expert council on narcotic substances, national council on mental health). Takes an active part in the joint action projects of the European Commission in the field of mental health. He participated in the Joint Action FRAILTY project funded by the EU, the coordinator for Bulgaria of the Joint Action Implemental, funded by the EU, the EUDIMEN project funded by the German government, the DAQUMECA project funded by the German government. He was a coordinator in the project "Improved mental health services" BG07 Public Health Initiatives Programme, funded under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. He is a researcher in the "Mental Health and Social Inequalities" project of SU "Kliment Ohridski", financed by the "Scientific Research" fund. He is a member of the COST Action 91133 FOSTREN project management. Dr. Nakov's participation in the RECOVER-E project "Scale-up of community-based mental health care for people with severe mental illness in Europe - models of functioning of mobile psychiatric teams, with the participation of "experts by experience" have been important from the point of view of the results achieved. They can serve as a serious organizational and methodological basis for reform in the field of outpatient psychiatric care and prevention of hospitalizations by creating mobile teams in psychiatry. In this project, Dr. Nakov has a key role in its successful implementation and presentation of the data internationally.

Dr. Nakov is actively involved in a number of clinical therapeutic and clinical diagnostic studies.

Assessment of teaching and learning activities

Dr. Nakov is a participant in the WHO project for Bulgaria related to the training of those working with refugees from conflict areas around the world and is one of the authors of the preparation of a manual for working with such contingents. He participated in the preparation of promotional materials intended for media representatives in connection with the media communication of suicide attempts. He was a part-time assistant at Neophyt Rilski University of Blagoevgrad, and since 2016 he has been a part-time assistant at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Department of "Primary and Preschool Pedagogy".

Scientific interests

As noted above, Dr. Nakov has a scientific interest in various areas of public psychiatry and mental health and, in parallel, publishes a number of articles, posters and communications of a clinical and clinical-pharmacological nature, participates in epidemiological studies in the field of suicidology. Dr. Nakov's most persistent scientific interest is in two areas - the history of psychiatry and the history and problems of suicidology. Proof of this is the upgrade of his dissertation work with a book on suicides in Bulgaria for a five-year period, as well as his monograph, which mainly examines the historical context of suicides and presents data for a 10-year period.

His participation in research related to the provision of psychiatric services in Bulgaria, as well as epidemiological studies on frequent mental disorders, confirm his broad scientific outlook and are an essential part of Dr. Nakov's research activity. These conducted and analyzed large-scale epidemiological studies of this type of disorders allow Bulgaria to participate in large-scale international consortia and to be able to be compared with different countries from all over the world.

Evaluation of publicist and popularization activity

Dr. Nakov actively participates in the discussion of health and health policy topics. There are numerous interviews in the media, in the daily press and in popular magazines on the topics of mental health, suicidology, health policy and current societal issues.

Evaluation of contributions

Dr. Nakov's scientific contributions are in the following areas:

- Suicidology
- History of medicine and suicidology in Bulgaria.
- Organization of health care and in particular psychiatric care,
- Epidemiological studies in the field of suicidology and mental illness.
- Legislation, patient rights and stigma for patients with mental illness.

Scientific and applied contributions are related to training of employees in public organizations on mental health issues (training of employees in registration and reception centers for asylum seekers and special homes for temporary accommodation of foreigners in Bulgaria), issues related to public aspects for the application of substances, both for fun and for treatment. The candidate participated in the evaluation of the properties and health effects of the use of nitrous oxide, in the analysis of the problem of the use of marijuana in medicine, or the so-called "medical marijuana", in the development of a low-threshold methadone

hydrochloride maintenance program for opioid dependent individuals and the associated benefits and risks.

It is important to note that in the monograph on medical marijuana (in which he has a significant author's contribution), for the first time in Bulgaria the question of the legal regulation of marijuana and the possibility of its being used not only as a means of entertainment, but also as a substance is raised, increasing the quality of life, as well as for medicinal purposes. Dr. Nakov also participated in the development of the topic of "paradise gas", which has become very relevant in society.

In his capacity as an expert, Dr. Nakov participated in the evaluation of compliance with the rights of patients with mental illnesses, as well as institutions for long-term accommodation of persons with mental illnesses. He participates as a state expert in the field of dementia at the international level, in various working groups and expert councils (on anti-doping, on issues of the application of the FCPA, expert council on narcotic substances, national council on mental health).

Summary

Dr. VI. Nakov is one of the few psychiatrists working in the intermediate field of practical specialist and established expert in the field of mental health and suicidology. He participated in a number of epidemiological studies of mental health in our country, studied resource provision, the organization and financing of psychiatric care. He is part of the teams for the development of several national programs in the field of mental health - National Mental Health Strategy 2006 - 2012, National Suicide Prevention Program - 2012 - 2018, National Mental Health Program and Action Plan - 2022 -2030

Dr. Nakov represents Bulgarian psychiatry in various international projects. His contribution to the development of Bulgarian psychiatry is significant, considering his participation in international research with teams of internationally recognized scientists.

At the national level, Dr. Nakov develops a number of analyzes on the organization of the health system and on the continuation of the reform in it - in psychiatric care and in general in the system as a whole.

Conclusion

In accordance with the quantitative and qualitative criteria determined by the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the Terms and Conditions for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and for the Occupancy of Academic Positions at the National Academy of Sciences, as well as on the basis of the presented evidence of the scientific, applied and analytical activity of the candidate, I strongly recommend to the honorable scientific jury to elect Dr. Vladimir Venkov Nakov to the academic position of "associate professor".

28.02.2023 г.

Reviewer:

