

## OPINION

On the dissertation on the topic: **Personal Profiles in Patients with Cardiac and Cardiac surgery**

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### 1. Data on the doctoral student.

In her autobiography Violeta Azis points out her professional commitments, starting her career as a human resources specialist Monday Ltd., Sofia (Bulgaria), later working as a psychologist in a private *Naughty Feet* kindergarten – Sofia. Since 2010 she has been a clinical psychologist at Lozenets Hospital in all its wards. Simultaneously, she has had a private practice as a psychotherapist and psychodrama therapist since 2013. She is a member of prestigious professional organizations - the Bulgarian Association of Psychotherapy and the Society of Psychologists.

### 2. Data on doctoral studies.

From the received documentation of Violeta Azis, I declare that the documents proposed for review have been precisely prepared and no violations have been established under the procedure, according to the Normative base for acquiring scientific degrees in the Republic of Bulgaria and at Sofia University.

### 3. Data on the dissertation and the abstract.

The dissertation is undoubtedly relevant. The experiences of patients with cardiac and cardiac surgery are a personally significant problem, but this problem also has social dimensions - they need psychological support, at the same time fail to verbalize their experiences of fear, anxiety, feelings of threat,

the end. This requires psychological counseling for the stabilization and recovery of the patients, providing significant care for achieving emotional balance. Knowing personal characteristics helps, on the one hand, to prevent the development of heart disease, and on the other - to individualize the provided help and rehabilitation. This is actually the focus of the dissertation.

The motivation for choosing the issue is dictated by the specific work of the doctoral student as a clinical psychologist in a hospital for cardiac and cardiac surgery, as Violeta Azis points out that her work includes providing support to both patients and their relatives. A prerequisite for successful defense of a doctoral dissertation is the practical knowledge of the interpreted problem.

The dissertation contains an introduction, three logically related chapters, conclusion, conclusions, appendices and references, written on 162 standard pages, and the reference to literature sources is relevant to the chosen issue and includes 220 titles, of which 26 in Bulgarian and 185 - foreign. (in English - 175, in French - 8 and in German - 2). The electronic references are 9. The correct citation in the text makes a good impression.

**The introduction** includes the relevance of the problem, its social significance and the purpose of the dissertation research. Written in understandable but strictly scientific language, it shows the personal commitment of the doctoral student to the problems.

**Chapter One: THEORETICAL POSITION** presents the leading theories and explanatory models relating to the relationship between personality characteristics and physical ailments, with an emphasis on the heart. The main components of psychosomatic theories, the theory of the specific personality, the specific model of response are briefly and concisely presented, the psychodynamic model is interesting, and a special place is given to the theory of alexithymia as a theory of non-specificity and the Paris Psychosomatic School. The same chapter highlights the basic constructs of psychoanalytic psychosomatics and their importance for the mental functioning and personal

organization of the individual. The innovation in this chapter is that the doctoral student seeks the relationship between stress, Covid-19 and cardiovascular disease, skillfully avoiding harsh medical terminology, emphasizing their psychological dimensions.

**The second chapter: ORGANIZATION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH** presents the research program, which clearly states the purpose, objectives, hypotheses, object of study, including 135 people, described in great detail by gender, age, cardiac interventions with a control sample. Dependent and independent variables are clearly defined. The selected tools are personal questionnaires - Self-assessment Scale for Alexithymia from Toronto; Anxiety Sensitivity Index; Personal questionnaire for DSM-5: abridged version, statistical data processing.

**The third chapter: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THE EMPIRICAL STUDY** presents in graphical and tabular form the data from the conducted research, with exemplary psychological analysis. It is correctly stated which hypotheses are fully proven and which are not confirmed and why. The reflections and discussion at the end of the third chapter, the indication of the limitations and difficulties in the conducted research, as well as the recommendations for future research, I accept as a request for ongoing research in the issues chosen by the doctoral student.

**The conclusion** is a summary of the theoretical and practical research of the author and supports the thesis of the necessary holistic approach to patients' diseases.

**The abstract** fully corresponds to the dissertation development and briefly presents the main points of the dissertation content.

#### **4. Scientific contributions.**

I fully accept and comment on the contributions formulated by the doctoral student for the dissertation:

1. An in-depth theoretical study of the various formulations related to the relationship between personal characteristics and physical illness has been made, with an emphasis on cardiac disease and cardiac surgery, comparing the world and Bulgarian experience.

2. The first Bulgarian study on the psychological impact of Covid-19 on patients with cardiovascular disease was conducted.

3. The influence of the psychological peculiarities /dispositions/ on the appearance and course of CVD has been outlined and experimentally proven.

4. Excellently planned and implemented experimental research provides an opportunity to design and conduct similar studies for patients with other diseases, and the data obtained, summaries and conclusions are useful for doctors, medical students, patients and their relatives.

5. The important role of psychological counseling and support for patients in the process of illness and recovery is highlighted, as an integral part of medical care.

## **5. Notes, questions, recommendations.**

No questions or notes on the work. I would like to see it as a monograph that is available to a wider range of readers, not only therapists and clinical psychologists, but also doctors and patients, as well as relatives of patients.

## **6. Publications and participation in scientific forums.**

The provided autobiography shows the numerous participations in various scientific forums, training related to individual and group therapy, psychodrama and supervision. The doctoral student has 30 publications - independently and in co-authorship /including with the supervisor/, and the publications on the dissertation are 10 in number, relevant to the topic of the dissertation and cover the minimum requirements for scientometrics for ONS "Doctor".

## 7. Conclusion.

Based on the above analysis, I recommend the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to vote positively for the award of the ONS "Doctor" to Violeta Azis with a dissertation on the topic: **Personal Profiles of Patients with Cardiac and Cardiac Surgery Interventions** in the direction: 3. Social, economic, legal sciences, 3.2. Psychology /Clinical Psychology/, as I give my POSITIVE vote.

28.02.2022  
Veliko Tarnovo

Signature:  
/Prof. Kr. Petrova /