

REVIEW

from Assoc. Prof. Dr. Milena Mutafchieva

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of a dissertation for obtaining of PhD in the professional field 3. 2 . Psychology,
scientific specialty General Psychology

Dissertation topic: "Impulsivity and negative affectivity in individuals addicted to
opiates in different stages of remission"

PhD student: Elena Hristova Psederska

Supervisors : Assoc. Prof. Jasmin Vasileva, PhD, Assoc. Prof. Nikola Atanasov, PhD

1. Significance of the researched problem in scientific and scientific-applied relation

The dissertation aims to assess the levels of negative affectivity and impulsivity in opiate addicts with different periods of remission. The significance of the study is based on the fact that previous research has focused mainly on polydependent individuals and people who are only opiate addicts have been poorly studied. In addition, research has focused mainly on the period of acute abstinence or the short period after its withdrawal, which does not allow to assess the neurocognitive and emotional characteristics of the person after prolonged abstinence. The few studies available on longer periods of remission show conflicting results in terms of restoring motivational significance, executive function, and negative affectivity in addicts. The research is scientifically important as it contributes to overcoming the limitations of previous research and answers, albeit in part, few research questions in the field. Applied, our knowledge of these changes and the identification of deficits in the abstinence process could help create data-based rehabilitation programs for addicted individuals.

The dissertation has a volume of 179 pages and is structured in an introduction, six chapters, including a description of the study, conclusion and appendices. The literature used has an impressive volume of 531 sources and most of it is in English. The correct citation of the sources in the text itself, as well as the absence of errors, makes an excellent impression. The whole text is written at a high professional level.

In the introduction, Elena Psederska focuses on the importance of her research in the context of previous research in the field. The theoretical part defines the concepts that underlie the dissertation and is comprehensive and in-depth. A critical review of a wide range of research has been made and controversial and open issues have been clearly outlined. There is a separate section in the text, which describes the methodological limitations of the research on negative affectivity and impulsivity in addicts, which shows a critical look and understanding of existing methodological paradigms.

2. Justification of the goals and tasks in the dissertation

I believe that Elena Psederska has excellently substantiated the goals and objectives of the study and they logically follow from the critical literature review.

3. Correspondence between the chosen methodology and research methodology and the set goal and tasks of the dissertation

The chosen methodology is completely suitable for the goals of the dissertation. The research is quasi-experimental, intergroup and cross-sectional, which has methodological limitations, but Elena Psederska has discussed them very clearly.

Although the sample of participants in this study overcomes the limitations arising from their heterogeneity in previous studies, the current sample also cannot be defined as very homogeneous. One of the reasons is that the time range of abstinence in both clinical groups is very different - from 30 days to 365 days for the group with short remission and from 395 days to 3285 days (9 years) for the group with longer abstinence. I understand that it is extremely difficult to provide a homogeneous sample on this criterion and I would not like my remark to be perceived as a weakness or criticism of the study, but I note only that this can be a polluting variable and should be discussed within the study. The same goes for the gender distribution - men predominate, which is also normal, as they are more likely to suffer from addictions.

A wide and appropriate set of tools for studying the target variables was used, as well as a wide range of data analyzes.

4. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the dissertation

The scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation are clearly substantiated and described by Elena Psederska. Scientific contributions include the detection of specific disorders of impulsivity and negative affectivity in people with opiate dependence and varying lengths of abstinence. The uniqueness of the study is rooted in the attempt to examine a wide range of emotional and neurocognitive characteristics of a sample of monosupported individuals. The PhD student also made a broad and in-depth review of addiction rehabilitation programs, where the findings of the study can be applied. In addition, scientific contributions can be found in the adaptation of a set of tools to establish personal and affective characteristics in people who use psychoactive substances.

5. Evaluation of dissertation publications

The publications on the topic of the dissertation are six in number - four of them in English and two in Bulgarian. It is a very good achievement that the publications in English are in a prestigious international magazine.

6. Opinions, recommendations and notes

The abstract adequately reflects the content of the dissertation. I agree with the contributions described in the dissertation.

In conclusion, I believe that the dissertation is at a very high professional level and reflects a current problem in the study of people with opiate addiction and has contributions to the scientific

literature on the subject and practical meaning in creating informed and personalized rehabilitation programs. The doctoral student shows excellent abilities to make an in-depth theoretical review, to plan and carry out independent research, to analyze the data with a wide range of appropriate methods, to present and summarize the results adequately. The research has clearly and correctly presented contributions.

Referring to these arguments, I can confidently and rightly recommend to the members of the esteemed jury to award Elena Hristova Pseuderska the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.2. Psychology, scientific specialty General Psychology.



Sofia

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