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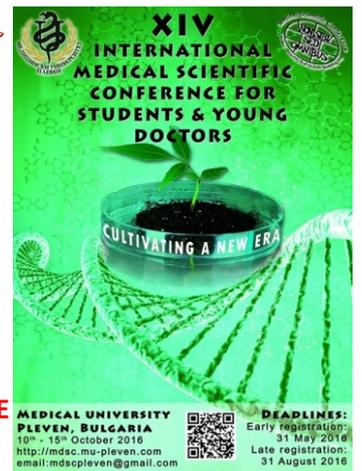
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INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
CONFERENCE FOR STUDENTS
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HELD AT MU-PLEVEN



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PROF. SLAVCHO TOMOV: THE CHANGES IN THE ADMISSION SYSTEM AND CONTENT HAVE LED TO A MORE RIGOROUS SELECTION

An interview with the Rector of MU-Pleven for BTA

Q: Prof. Tomov, your university has once again accepted a record-high number of all students. What makes it so popular?

A: For yet another year we have established ourselves as one of the leading providers of medical higher education. The facts speak for themselves. The effects of the demographic crisis in Bulgaria this year are truly crippling with the lowest number of high-school graduates in recent history. And yet the number of students applying for our university has only risen through the years. This year, with the new Faculty of Pharmacy, the number of applicants has easily exceeded 1000. The competition is becoming even fiercer with 7 students now applying for only one spot.

Q: Have you analyzed the reasons behind these results?

A: We have, and there are several reasons. First of all - the new field of study, Pharmacy, which is available this year. Secondly - for the past few years we have struggled to make our admission campaign more accessible, more interesting and more inclusive by extending its reach and duration. We have also embraced the concept of an all-year admission campaign. Last but not least - the quality of education at MU-Pleven has marked a steady increase through the years.

Q: How do you prove this in practice rather than just theory?

A: By creating a product that is highly sought after not only in our country but abroad. Our specialists are in high demand on an international level, our diplomas are accepted everywhere. These are the things that make us interesting as a higher education provider.

Q: You have changed the admission system recently. Can

you briefly outline these changes?

A: We have made a switch from a purely knowledge-based grading system towards a more comprehensive one, which includes grading not only of accumulated knowledge but also intelligence and potential. We have made these changes while considering the shift in demand on the job market. Especially concerning what constitutes a good professional and a good medical specialist. The old examination methods which required the mechanical learning and acquiring of knowledge lacked depth and were morally obsolete. Despite all the shortcomings of the new test system - which is far from perfect - we still believe it to be far more practical and overall better than the previous one. Our experts made sure the new test would bring out the full potential in every applicant.

Q: Where would you find enough students with potential? Don't most of the excellent students leave to study overseas?

A: The falling standards of secondary education and the overall insufficient levels of knowledge after high school do prompt some high-profile students to choose education abroad. However, that does not mean there are no capable students who chose to stay and work in their motherland. The idea of the new examinations is to pick the best of them to attend our university.

I am convinced we have chosen the right path; we're on the right track. The very fact that the vast majority of prospective students and their parents have agreed, supported and have been delighted by the change is noteworthy and not to be underestimated. Also worth mentioning is that the previous



examination format required the mechanical rendering of certain textbooks by the students - the new tests are not dependent on any one textbook but on amassed knowledge in the fields of chemistry and biology in general.

Q: Are all exams for medical universities unified? Are all of them the same?

A: No. Every university has a different set of exams to evaluate their applicants. The results we get from ours are, indeed, very satisfying.

Q: Some may say that the new tests set the bar lower for new students? Are the new tests easier?

A: On the contrary. It was not our intention to lower the bar but to set it even higher. To achieve a mark of "Very Good" (5) students are required to answer more than 90% of the test correctly. This is by no means a low bar. There has long been interest towards the many fields of study a medical university has to offer - this has not changed. Today's high-school alumni have proven inquisitive and knowledgeable of universities and their reputation. With the new method of examination, we aim not only to evaluate but respect and acknowledge the applicants' intelligence.

Interview by M. Reshovski

NEW RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT MU-PLEVEN OPENS DOORS

In accordance to Decree #210, August 18th, 2016 of the Council of Ministers, a new Research Institute opened doors as part of MU-Pleven. The Ministry of Education and Science approved the request of MU-Pleven to open a new Research Institute as part of its structure after affirming that it corresponds to the new principles of higher education (which include a heavy emphasis on research).

The new research institute will replace and expand on the activities of the previously existing Research Center. In its structure, emphasis will be placed on modern equipment, facilities, financial and scientific potential, which will be subdivided into sectors. The sectors will focus on multi-field teams of researchers, working on various topics, including the development of medicine, the betterment of healthcare and quality of life, etc. Its funding will come directly from MU-Pleven's budget, as well as from various funding initiatives from Bulgaria and abroad.



ADMISSION CAMPAIGN AT MU-PLEVEN, 2016 AFTERMATH: RECORD-HIGH NUMBER OF APPLICANTS AND HIGH SCORES ON THE ADMISSION EXAMS

Admission campaign 2016 at MU-Pleven marks a record-high number of applicants - 1183. 823 of all candidates took the exams for "Medicine" field of study and the newly-established "Pharmacy" field of study. This constitutes 7 people applying for every single available spot in those specialties. The number of students applying for the eight Bachelor-degree specialties the university has is 478 total for the faculties of Public Health, Health Care, and the Medical College.

A higher-than-usual number of applicants filed their forms online this year - 42,43%; 36% applied directly from the designated rooms at the Rectorate building and 21% used the various application stations throughout the country.

The Chemistry and Biology exams for "Medicine" and "Pharmacy" took place on the 5th and 12th July 2016 at the Rectorate 1 and 2 buildings at MU-Pleven. The applicants who had attended the mock exams previously this year had the opportunity to apply with the higher of the two results achieved.

After the three rounds of application and rating, the lowest round one scores were 34.28 (out of



a maximum of 36) for the girls and 31.04 for the boys. The lowest round three scores to allow acceptance were 33.02 for the girls and 27.14 for the boys. Seven applicants received the maximum possible score of 36. Six of them chose MU-Pleven as their Alma Mater.

This year, MU-Pleven will accept 450 new students as a whole - most of them have already been enrolled while applications for the Master's degree in "Public Health and Health Management" are still ongoing. 398 of these students are accepted on a state scholarship. 136 is the number of students accepted in "Medicine" and "Pharmacy", 16 of who come from Moldova, Ukraine, Serbia, and Macedonia

but have Bulgarian roots and regard themselves as Bulgarians. The exact number of new students to attend classes in the eight Bachelor degrees is 202, divided between the Faculty of Health Care, The Faculty of Public Health and The Medical College.

Additionally, with the approval of the state, 24 students will be accepted on self-funding. Self-funding annual tuition fees remain unchanged at 7414lv. for students of "Medicine"; 2303lv. for "Medical Rehabilitation and Ergotherapy" and 4165lv. for "Nursing", "Midwifery", "Medical Laboratory Assistant", "X-ray Technician", "Assistant Pharmacist".



THE TRADITIONAL INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE FOR STUDENTS AND YOUNG PHYSICIANS TO BE HELD AT MU-PLEVEN

Event program includes: a multitude of presentations from world-renowned scientists and high-tech seminars

From the 10th till the 15th October 2016 - in a five-day format - MU-Pleven will host the XIV International Scientific Conference for Students and Young Physicians. The event, titled "Cultivating a New Era" will include various interesting initiatives, focusing on the latest achievements in medicine as well as innovative approaches to medical education, science, and practices.

For a second consecutive year, the conference will begin with "Autumn School for Innovation in the Field of Medicine". Its program include:

- 10th October 2016 - "Problems with elderly patients with congenital heart disease." Moderator of the event: Prof. Dr. Tsvetomir Lukanov, Head of the Department of Children Cardio surgery, University Hospital "Heidelberg" - Germany.

- 11th October 2016 - "Translational Medicine - General Concepts, Approaches and Methods." Moderators of the event: Prof. Dr. Amid Shahzad, President of EUSTM and Prof. Gottfried Kioler, ASTM.

The official opening ceremony for the conference on the 11th will be concluded by an academic lecture by the special guest: Prof. Dr. Robert Holloway, Florida Hospital, US.

- Seminar: "High-tech medicine and the experience of MU-Pleven", including demonstration in realistic conditions on the 3D medical table for virtual dissections, which allows for research of all kinds of medical images of pre-clinic and clinical practice



through the automatic generation of 3D and the dimensional detailing of an object. There will also be a viewing of life 3DSurgery.

- Work meeting: "Laparoscopic Methods in Surgery, Midwifery and Gynecology." During the meeting, the young scientists will work in small teams with a moderator and a nurse, improving their laparoscopic skills in the box and virtual simulator. The work meeting will be moderated by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobromir Dimitrov, MD and Dr. Lachezar Tanchev, MD.

The conference program on 13th and 14th October 2016 includes lectures of renowned medical specialists from Bulgaria and abroad, some of who:

- Prof. Dr. Kypros Nicolaides, Head of Fetal Medicine Center at King's College Hospital, London

- Dr. Petya Chaveeva, MD, Certified specialists in Fetal Medicine under Prof. Nicolaides, also the first to locally perform an intrauterine operation in a case of fetal diaphragm hernia. Dr. Chaveeva will take part of discussion on life surgery.

- Dr. Kenichiro Hasumi, MD, Founder of Hasumi International

Research Foundation. Dr. Kenichiro Hasumi is a physician, specialized in cancer immunotherapy and terminal care. He is also a researcher and visionary, focused on the development of cancer vaccines and improved clinical treatments to achieve better patient outcomes with a higher quality of life. Dr. Hasumi has a Degree Honoris

Causa at MU-Pleven and will participate with a lecture, themed: "New Approach to Inhibiting CTL Immune Tolerance after Induction Treatment with HITV."

- Prof. Dr. Deen Man, Pathology Department, University of Maryland and Prof. Dr. Milcho Minchev, National Specialized Hospital for Active Treatment of Haematologic Diseases, Sofia will take part in a scientific discussion, focusing on "Immunology and Cancer."

- Dr. Ronald Harvey, Fulbright scholarship student, DePol University, Chicago, USA. He will attend with a lecture, titled: "The Role of Social Aid and Accommodation in Maintaining Sobriety After Treatment Amongst the Addicted to Drugs and Alcohol."

- Prof. Dr. Dimitar Gospodinov, MD, PhD, Head of Sector "Dermatology and Venereology", MU-Pleven, Member of the governing body of Bulgarian Dermatological Society.

More information on the registration, organization and other initiatives can be acquired on the official site of the conference: <http://mdsc.mu-pleven.bg>

Info by V. Dukova

MEDICAL COLLEGE AT MU-PLEVEN IS HOLDING ITS 14 NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

On 6th-7th October 2016, Medical College at MU-Pleven will hold its 14th National Scientific Conference for students and lecturers. The thematic fields include: "Medical Diagnostic Investigations", "Social Activities", "Prevention and Public Health". Honorable guest of the event: Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, MD, Rector of MU-Pleven.



BACHELORS OF PHARMACY TO ATTEND A NATIONAL SEMINAR IN PLEVEN THIS AUTUMN

On 8th-9th October 2016, Pleven will host an "Autumn Seminar", organized by the Bulgarian Association of Bachelors of Pharmacy. The attendance list includes Bachelors of Pharmacy from the entire country, official guests, and partners. Participant students will receive a certificate of attendance and the corresponding number of credits.



ACCREDITATION PROCESS COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY FOR ALL FIELDS OF STUDY AT THE FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH, MU-PLEVEN

The Accreditation Committee at NEAA (National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency) convened on 19th May 2016 and 14th April 2016, resulting in the following decisions concerning the Faculty of Public Health at MU-Pleven:

1. Approved program accreditation of "Healthcare Management" Bachelor's and Master's degree.

2. Approved program accreditation of "Healthcare Management" PhD courses.

3. Approved accreditation of:

• Bachelor's degree:

➤ Medical Rehabilitation and Ergotherapy (field of study)

➤ Preservation and Control of Public Health

• Major's degree:

➤ Public Health and Health Management

MU-Pleven is also the first among the medical universities in Bulgaria to be accredited to conduct long-distance Major's degree courses in Public Health and Health Management. Long-distance education at MU-Pleven is part of the "Innovative Contemporary Education" initiative, spearheaded by Assist. Prof. Georgi Tsanev. This type of educational modal is well-received by both medical and non-medical students because it allows

for great educational opportunities. It makes use of a rich electronic database of resources, allows for sophisticated time-management, ensures constant communication between students and lecturers, offers ease of consultation and is very supportive of self-preparation and self-study. The first experimental group of 25 students have successfully completed the 1,5-year course and the Faculty of Public Health is ready to accept its first regular groups - application documents can be submitted up until 1st October 2016.



MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - PLEVEN WILL PARTNER AND HOST THE EUROPEAN RESEARCHERS' NIGHT - 2016

The European Researchers' Night is a mega event, sponsored by the European Commission for Research and Innovation "Marie Skłodowska-Curie". This Europe-wide public event is dedicated to popular science and fun learning. It takes place each year on the last Friday in September. More than 30 countries and over 300 cities are involved.

This year, the event will take place on September 30th and MU-Pleven will host the local edition. The theme of the event will be: "Food - a history, a symbol, a medicine - focus on beans and bean foods" as part of the FRESH (Find Researchers Everywhere and Share) project. MU-Pleven is

partnering with VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", the local branch of USB (Union of Scientists in Bulgaria), the Regional History Museum - Pleven.

Event will take place in three phases:

• Phase 1 (17:00-18:00) - Regional History Museum - theme: "Regional Agricultural History"

• Phase 2 (18:00-20:15) - "Ambroise Pare" hall, MU - theme: "Beans and Bean Foods: A Forgotten yet Useful Tradition."

• Phase 3 (20:15-23:00) - "Ambroise Pare" hall, MU - theme: "Symbols of Sacred Food."



UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL PLEVEN WILL RECEIVE 1.1 MILLION LEV FOR MEDICAL EQUIPMENT FROM "BULGARIAN CHRISTMAS" INITIATIVE

By the end of October, 2016 University hospital for multi-profile treatment - Pleven will receive a 1.1 million lev donation from the "Bulgarian Christmas" initiative to later utilize for the purchase of medical equipment. University hospital - Pleven is one of the 19 hospitals in the country to benefit from the initiative.

On 1st December 2015, the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Rosen Plevneliev initiated a campaign, titled "Let us help the children in Reanimation." The campaign aims to help children with life-threatening or critical conditions who constitute 5% of hospital admissions. These conditions often develop rapidly and need speedy reaction and adequate treatment. If not correctly and hastily treated, these conditions threaten severe after-effects, disability or even death.

So far, "Bulgarian Christmas" has helped with the examination, treatment and rehabilitation of 405 children. Parent, whose children are in need of similar help can apply for aid from the "Bulgarian Christmas" on the site of the initiative: <http://www.bgkoleda.bg/>.



NEW EXPOSITION AT THE MUSEUM OF MEDICINE IN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - PLEVEN

On 8th September 2016 at the Museum of Medicine located in University Hospital - Pleven a new exposition called "Paralax" will be unveiled. The "Atanas Petrov" foundation will be a guest of honor at the hospital, which will lend its buildings to the young artists from the foundation to work in collaboration with the medical staff and students. The artists will come from many different European countries and backgrounds: architecture, sculpture, new media, painting, performance, etc. The aim is to create art outside of the box of the contemporary artistic expression.



UNIQUE OPERATION PERFORMED BY NEUROSURGEONS AT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - PLEVEN

The neurosurgeons at University hospital, Pleven performed a trailblazing operation of a 57-year old man from the small town of Dermantsi, who impaled his head on a bamboo stick after a fall. The surgical team (Assoc. Prof. Panov, Head of the Clinic of Neurosurgery, Team Leader; Assist. Prof. Dr. Iliya Valkov; Dr. Katya Lubenova, Anesthetist) managed to save his life in an almost impossible situation.

The CT scan determined the stick had pierced 15 cm. into the skull, passing through the eye socket, close to the optic nerves into the cerebellum where it caused a progressively worsening hemorrhage, with blood

invading the brain cavities.

The urgent surgical procedure which Assoc. Prof. Panov called "improvised" went on for two hours. In order to save the life of the patient, the team had to remove the blood clots, stop the bleeding and free the socket, while trying not to damage the link with the cardiovascular and respiratory centers. The bamboo had to be carefully removed, risking a massive hemorrhage due to the damaged blood vessels. However, after the extraction was complete successfully it only took one day for the patient to regain consciousness. After some infectious



complications, the patient is now gradually recovering. His left-eye vision has been completely retained, movement range of the appendices and intellectual potential have also been retained.



ORTHOPEAEDIC SURGEONS AT "DR. GEORGI STRANSKI" HOSPITAL PERFORMED TWO EXCEPTIONAL OPERATIONS

A team of physicians comprised of Assist. Prof. Dr. Emil Simeonov and Assist. Prof. Dr. Mancho Kovachev, lead by Assoc. Prof. Vihar Kovachev succeeded in performing a difficult operation on a British citizen. He was admitted with severe fractures in the pelvis area after a car accident. The surgical intervention took 5 hours and was considered high-risk. The surgical team used one of the new methods to gain frontal access to the pelvis – through the stomach area. This innovative approach can be hazardous because of the near proximity of many vital organs and major vessels. The fracture was fixated with two implants and then anatomically reconstructed. The surgeons explained that without this intervention, the patient would never have been able to walk again. Meanwhile, another team of orthopedists from Pleven performed an

operation, the likes of which have never before been done in Bulgaria. A team of physicians, lead by Assoc. Prof. Kovachev and comprised of Dr. Gigov, Dr. Mancho Kovachev, Dr. Shargabi and Anesthetist Dr. Lazarova managed to miraculously prevent the leg amputation of a 65-year old woman from Veliko Tarnovo. The patient had previously suffered from a serious infection resulting from a broken femur. The two operations that followed did not stop or slow the advance of the infection and an amputation was being considered as the last and final option. That is when the team from Pleven stepped in, suggesting an alternative approach by a resection of 2/3 of the femur (hipbone) and the knee joint and applying a fixator afterwards. This treatment proves successful and the physicians are finally able to stop the spread of the infection. After 5 months of treatment, the infection is finally under control and after 5-hour long operation, the femur is reconstructed. The reconstructive operation wa



IMPROVISED ROCK CONCERT FOR THE STAFF AND STUDENTS AT MU-PLEVEN WAS HELD BY THE STUDENTS OF PLEVEN'S HIGH SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS

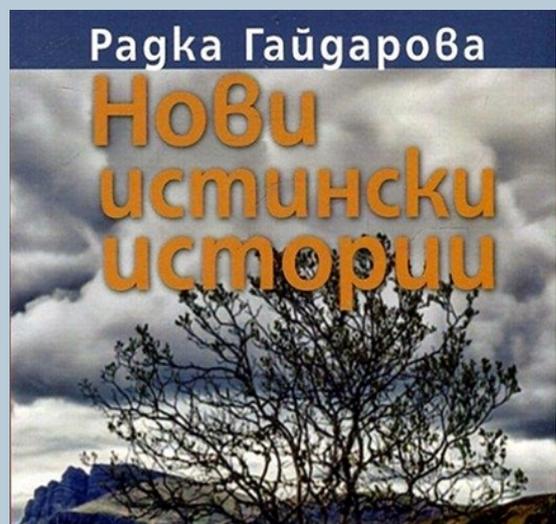


During lunch break on 15th July 2016, Friday, a rock group from Pleven's High School of Mathematics, MG "Geo Milev" performed an improvised rock concert for the pleasantly surprised staff and students of MU-Pleven. The idea for the event belongs to Assoc. Prof. Zdravka Radeonova, Vice Rector of Research at MU-Pleven. She later elaborated: "This is a common practice in universities around the globe - to organize similar concerts at the end of a work week. I wanted to introduce this tradition to MU-Pleven as well, so that the students and staff can have some fun and relaxing time on a Friday."

Assoc. Prof. Radeonova invited Jivko Georgiev, Veselin Manov, Vasil Vasilev and Michael Nikolov - members of MG "Geo Milev" rock group to perform outside the Rectorate building. The high-school students managed to impress their audience with some quality rock music. The aim of this concert is to be the first step of an initiative with many more performances to follow.

ASSOC. PROF. RADKA GAIDAROVA'S NEW BOOK IS TITLED "NEW TRUE STORIES"

Assoc. Prof. Radka Gaidarova's new book - "New True Stories" is the third book of her book series "True Stories". In it, Assoc. Prof. Gaidarova who is a veteran psychiatrist with many years of practice tells true stories from her life and work. The book's first reading is to take place on 20th September 2016 at the Art Center, Pleven.



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