



Academia MEDICA

Publication
on Ecology
and Medicine



ISSN - 1314 - 958X

Vol.1, (January - February) 2018

MU - Pleven's Medical Newspaper / 1.00 lv.

THE "CREATING A TRAINING CENTER FOR DOCTORAL, POST-DOCTORAL, POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS AT THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE, MU-PLEVEN" PROJECT

p. 2



THE START OF STUDENT CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN 2018

p. 7

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – PLEVEN ATTENDED THE START OF THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR AND TOOK THE ACADEMIC OATH

p. 5



MEDICAL UNIVERSITY-PLEVEN



p. 5

EXCELLS IN THE "HEALTH CARE" PROFESSIONAL FIELD IN THE 2017 RATING SYSTEM FOR A SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

THE "HEART CARE FOR LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE" NATIONAL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN PLEVEN

p. 6



MU-PLEVEN STUDENT AWARDED "STUDENT OF THE YEAR" IN THE "HEALTHCARE" CATEGORY

p. 8

ACTIVITIES PART OF PROJECT № BG05M2OP001-2.009-0031-C01 "CREATING A TRAINING CENTER FOR DOCTORAL, POST-DOCTORAL, POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS AT THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF MU-PLEVEN"

Project № BG05M2OP001-2.009-0031-C01 "Creating a training center for doctoral, post-doctoral, post-graduate students and young scientists at the Faculty of Medicine of MU-Pleven" is part of the Operational Programme "Science and education for smart growth" 2014-2020, co-funded by the European Union through the European Structural and Investment Funds. Grants for the project amount to BGN 695,631.34 and the implementation period is 24 months. The aim of the project is to train over 30 young scientists from the surgical specialties, aid them in acquiring practical skills and provide them motivation for sustainable academic development by working in a real environment with proper scientific equipment. Doctoral and post-graduate students and young doctors are expected to develop analytical skills for research, as well as to increase their readiness and adaptability for professional realization.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СТРУКТУРНИ И
ИНВЕСТИЦИОННИ ФОНДОВЕ



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА
НАУКА И ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ ЗА
ИНТЕЛИГЕНТЕН РАСТЕЖ

SECOND DOCTORAL SCHOOL SESSION BEGINS WITH NEW DOCTORAL, POST-GRADUATE AND YOUNG SCIENTIST GROUP

Assoc. Prof. Maria Simeonova, MD gave start to the first training course of the second session of the Doctoral School for the new target group under Project № BG05M2OP001-2.009-0031-C01 "Creating a training center for doctoral, post-doctoral, post-graduate students and young scientists at the Faculty of Medicine of MU-Pleven", at the Faculty of Pharmacy building of MU-Pleven. The group is made up of 21 young scientists among who 7 doctoral students, 5 post-doctoral, 5 post-graduate students and 4 assistant professors. The first training course was on the topic of "Laws and regulations concerning doctoral studies in Bulgaria and MU-Pleven". Some of the lecturers include leading experts –persons with academic ranks and specialists experienced in training doctoral students, research and teaching, possessing communication and presentation skills in an academic context and skills for working with organized scientific information – databases and scientific libraries. Some of the lecturers are assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Simeonova, Prof. Dr. P. Hristova, Prof. Dr. S. Yankulovska,

Prof. M. Alexandrova, assoc. Prof. Dr. Valentinova and Gabriel Georgiev.

There are nine training courses in the Doctoral School under Action 1: "Laws and regulations concerning doctoral studies in Bulgaria and MU-Pleven"; "Research methodology"; "Application of epidemiology and biostatistics in medical and scientific research"; "Biostatistics in Medicine"; "Moral and ethical aspects of scientific research. Ethics Commission and informed consent"; "Working with ordered electronic information (databases, bibliography and citation)"; "Planning and managing research projects"; "Structure and layout of a scientific article. Report presentation"; "Structure, layout and presentation of a thesis".

The goal is for doctoral students and young scientists to be motivated and aided in developing their research and academic careers by providing them with training in skills and competences in the sphere of academic writing; research methodology and biostatistics; moral and ethical aspects of scientific research; project development; working with ordered scientific information - databases, scientific libraries, and others.

The training courses are expected to develop analytical skills pertinent to research in doctoral and post-graduate students and young doctors, as well as to increase their readiness and adaptability when it comes to professional realization.



FIRST TWO-DAY INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS, POST-GRADUATES AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS IN VELIKO TARNOVO

The first two-day interactive workshop was held in Veliko Tarnovo on January 20th and 21st 2018. The workshop was realized through Project № BG05M2OP001-2.009-0031-C01 "Creating a training center for doctoral, post-doctoral, post-graduate students and young scientists at the Faculty of Medicine of MU-Pleven" according to Operational Programme "Science and education for smart growth" 2014-2020, co-funded by the European Union through the European Structural and Investment Funds. 30 young scientists received training on the topic of "Preparing project proposals for financing research, protection and management of intellectual property in the transfer of knowledge and technologies" under Action 3 "Conducting training for participation and preparation of research projects, current proposals, technology transfer and intellectual property management".

On the first day of the seminar in Veliko Tarnovo, assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobromir Dimitrov, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and keynote lecturer introduced MU-Pleven doctoral students, post-graduates and young scientists to the with the basic rules for the preparation of successful project proposals for funding research. He explained concepts such as knowledge and technology transfer, giving them interesting examples from European and world practice – the China Republic's Belt and Road Initiative for development and cooperation in all fields to improve infrastructure linking the states located along the Silk Road. At the end his lecture, assoc. Prof. Dimitrov offered the young scientists an interesting challenge – prepare and present their own project proposal to provide funding for their scientific work in their field, by the end of the first day of the workshop. Assoc. Prof. Dimitrov provided to his young colleagues the priority areas in the preparation of the project proposal: Telemedicine – Clinical Application, 3D Medicine – Application in Clinical and Basic Science, Electronic 3D Microscopy, Virtual and Augmented Reality in Medicine.

The improvised Project Workshop included 7 groups working on their project proposals with the help of mentors – Prof. Maria Sredkova, assoc. Prof. Galya Starveva, assoc. Prof. Dobromir Dimitrov and assoc. Prof. Pencho Tonchev. After drafting their project proposals, the young scientists presented and defended them. The moderators and project team members rated those with great potential for success – Creating a Knowledge and Technology Transfer Center with the use of virtual and augmented reality at MU-Pleven; Establishing a National Emergency Surgery Training Center; Surgery Safety through individual, virtual and augmented reality; Center for Emergency Telemedicine Treatment.

The program continued with a lecture by assoc. Prof. Dr. Galia Stavreva, Vice Rector of Research at MU-Pleven and Project Coordinator. The lecture provided the young scientists with valuable information and guidance on how to navigate the vast space of scientific publications, such as types, scientific publications, databases and quotes.

The second day continued with a presentation by assoc. Prof. Ilian Baychev, lecturer at the Faculty of Law at the "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" University of Veliko Tarnovo and lawyer at the Bar Association in Veliko Tarnovo. In it he introduced the young audience to legislature relating to copyright protection under the Copyright Act, as well as to current legislation and outlook of the European Patent System.

Project № BG05M2OP001-2.009-0031-C01 "Creating a training center for doctoral, post-doctoral, post-graduate students and young scientists at the Faculty of Medicine of MU-Pleven" part of the Operational Programme "Science and education for smart growth" 2014-2020 envisions several workshops that will educate participants through useful lectures by leading experts and through meetings and discussions with business representatives and participation in practical classes.



MU-PLEVEN DOCTORAL AND POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS TO TAKE PART IN TRAINING COURSES AND ACADEMIC MOBILITY ABROAD

Sixty doctoral and post-graduate students and young scientists will take part in academic mobility and training courses Activity №5 "Support for individual scientific research and career development of individuals in the target group", part of Project № BG05M2OP001-2.009-0031-C01 "Creating a training center for doctoral, post-doctoral, post-graduate students and young scientists at the Faculty of Medicine of MU-Pleven". The opportunities for academic mobility will enrich their scientific experience and increase their professional qualification by allowing them to exchange knowledge with colleagues from other institutions in the country and abroad. Mobility is realized through participation in scientific forums in the country and abroad (congresses, conferences or specialized trainings) as well as through training courses. In this way young doctors and scientists are given access to work with specialized equipment and the guidance of leading international and local specialists.

Dr. Tsvetomir Ivanov attended a practical course for colorectal surgery in colon cancer at the end of January 2018,



in the city of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Dr. Ivanov is a graduate of the Medical University - Pleven, a young doctor - a postgraduate and a full-time doctoral student in General Surgery. He is a visiting assistant professor of general surgery at the Department of "Surgical Diseases" of MU-Pleven and his academic interests include minimally invasive surgery and HIFU treatment of benign and malignant tumors. In September 2017, Dr. Ivanov completed a specialization in HIFU technology for the treatment of benign and malignant tumors in China.



About the course in Ljubljana, Dr. Ivanov said: "The course included many post-graduates and young specialists from Europe - Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania and Denmark. The training was divided into several lecture sessions, which were followed by practical exercises on cadavers. The lecturers were famous specialists from leading clinics in Europe - prominent professors from Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovenia."



ROBOT-ASSISTED OPERATION DEMONSTRATION BY PROF. GRIGOR GORCHEV FOR DOCTORAL AND POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS

Two consecutive robot-assisted surgical training courses were conducted as part of Action 2 "Personalized approach in preoperative preparation and surgical treatment of patients through minimally invasive surgery based on imaging reconstructions, 3D visualization and virtual simulation" which is part of Project № BG05M2OP001-2.009-0031-C01 "Creating a training center for doctoral, post-doctoral, post-graduate students and young scientists at the Faculty of Medicine of MU-Pleven". On February 16, 2018, at the Ambroise Pare Hall of the Telecommunications Endoscopic Center, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Rector of MU-Pleven, gave a lecture on "Minimal Invasive Gynecological Surgery - Basic Principles and Perspectives" alongside a 3D operation demonstration. On 23.02.2018, Member of correspondence for the Academy of Science Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev, Director of the Research Institute, presented the second lecture on "Robot-assisted Radical Laparoscopic Hysterectomy", also including a 3D

operation demonstration. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary since the first robotic surgery in Southeastern Europe and Bulgaria, Prof. Gorchev made a historical review of the development of this type of surgery by his team. Prof. Gorchev recalled some very important facts from the 10-year course of robotics development in Pleven.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - PLEVEN ATTENDED THE START OF THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR AND TOOK THE ACADEMIC OATH

An Academic Oath ritual introduced the newly admitted international students to Medical University - Pleven at the opening of the academic year 2017/2018. On February 19, in the overcrowded Magnum Hall of the Second Clinical Center, they solemnly repeated the words of the oath recited by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Asparuh Asparuhov, declaring that they would respect their lecturers and fellow students, as well the dignity of patients. The aim of this new ritual is to incorporate them into the core values and mission of the University and to make them ethically committed to the Code of Ethics and to the academic traditions of the University.

The rector, Prof. Slavcho Tomov, welcomed the international students. They were also welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Asparuh Asparuhov, as well as by their Bulgarian and international student colleagues. The first year students were also welcomed by a special performance by a Japanese students' ensemble, participants in the People's Day 2017.

This year there were once again many international students admitted to study "Medicine" at MU-Pleven. The first year international students are more than 250 from 26 countries, most of which are European countries. For the first time, there are students from Romania and Kosovo. The most, for the first time, are the students from Italy, followed by citizens of Great Britain, India, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Greece, Finland, Canada, Australia and Japan. MU-Pleven is famous for being the first university to introduce medical education for international students entirely in English, in

1997. So far, there have been 14 years of international doctor graduates who have succeeded professionally all over the world - in the USA, Europe, India and Australia.

Before the beginning of the school year, the Center for International Students organized an Adaptation Program for newly admitted international students. It includes informative tours at the University, Open Day at the University Library, meetings with real estate agencies and the Migration service. Organized tours to the Pleven Epopee 1877 Panorama, the Regional History Museum and the Iliya Beshkov Art Gallery, acquainted the international students with the cultural and historical heritage of Pleven. Preliminary Bulgarian classes were organized for them for the first time, so they could begin their first school day with "Добър ден!"



MEDICAL UNIVERSITY-PLEVEN EXCELLS IN THE "HEALTH CARE" PROFESSIONAL FIELD IN THE 2017 RATING SYSTEM FOR A SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR



There was an award ceremony on the 12th of January at the Military Club in Sofia to award the prizes of excelling Bulgarian universities according to the 2017 rating system.

The event sought to make public good examples to academic, state and business representatives. The event was held immediately after the public announcement of the results of the important competition - the higher schools ratings in the Republic of Bulgaria. For the second consecutive year, the Ministry of Education and Science, the *Open Society* Foundation and the 24 *Chasa* newspaper, with the help of *Dundee Precious Metals*, *Unicredit Bulbank* and "Kaolin", organized an official award ceremony for the

rectors of the 23 best universities in the country. Once again, the event brought together academics, ministers, mayors and business representatives. Among the awardees was Medical University-Pleven. For the second consecutive year it won first place in the "Health Care" professional field. Georgi Stoichev, Executive Director of *Open Society*, and head of the

team conducting the rating of the higher schools, presented the award to Rector Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov. He presented the award to journalists in Pleven on January 29.



THE “HEART CARE FOR LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE” NATIONAL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN PLEVEN

A national campaign under the heading “Heart care for a long and fulfilling life” was launched on 12 December 2017 in Pleven. The Bulgarian Cardiac Institute, Bulgarian National Television and the National Association of Municipalities campaign aims to reduce cardiovascular diseases, prolong the life of patients, and improve the quality and access to heart medical care. The campaign was launched at the “Heart and Brain” Hospital in Pleven by Prof. Toni Vekov, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hospital, assoc. Prof. Sotir Marchev, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Cardiac Institute, Head of the cardiology clinic at “Heart and Brain” Hospital, and Prof. Vladimir Danov – head of the cardiac surgery clinic at the hospital.

Prof. Tony Vekov explained that the campaign platform is to extend the life of patients in small settlements by preventing cardiovascular disease and providing better quality and access to medical care. He stressed that the purpose of the campaign is to provide cardiac examinations in places where there is little access. “We were surprised by the number of people registered so far – more than 12,500, including small town residents, which confirms what a number of Bulgarian specialists have suspected – that obviously access to hospital medical care is limited in the countryside and in small towns.”

Assoc. Prof. Sotir Marchev, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Cardiac Institute, also the main organizer of the campaign, added that there have been examination and consultation requests from 323 settlements in 73 municipalities in the country. He announced that because of the great interest, the campaign will last

for three months and some of the municipalities will receive two visitations in order to provide health services to all those who seek them.

During the campaign first press conference it was revealed that some towns and villages the examination requests were more than 800. Assoc. Prof. Marchev added that within the Pleven region two municipalities have submitted requests, Dolna Mitropolia – 15, and Cherven bryag – 100, and the expectations are for them to increase by the end of the year. He explained the motivation for the campaign, cardiologists in the country are unevenly distributed, the majority of them are in the capital and in several bigger cities while smaller cities do not have a permanent cardiologist, which makes access to such specialists quite difficult, even further, some people cannot travel because of financial reasons. “That’s why we will try to aid smaller towns and villages, where people cannot easily see a cardiac specialist, by sending out teams of our own cardiologists and nurses who will give ECG examinations. More than 150 cardiologists from the Bulgarian Cardiac Institute will join the campaign, and the Institute will cover the costs of examinations and equipment. The teams will work according to a schedule, as requested by mayors who have provided consultation facilities. Patients will not have to pay for anything. It is only necessary to provide records for all related previous examinations.” Assoc. Prof. Marchev shared with the audience: “We hope to be the spark that ignites other colleagues to do the same, because these places are in need of other specialists, too.”

Prof. Vladimir Danov, head of the cardiac surgery clinic at “Heart and



Brain” Hospital in Pleven, pointed out that there is an increase in patients, less than 50 years of age, with heart problems. He stressed that since the end of February, there have been 450 cardiac surgeries at the Hospital's Cardiac Surgery Clinic. Many of the cases had been emergencies with a positive outcome because it is not necessary to transport the patients to Sofia. Prof. Tony Vekov said that “Heart and Brain” Hospital in Pleven has already received a license from the Ministry of Health for neurosurgical work, and it is expected that the contract with the NHIF will be signed before 2018. The professor also shared news about one of the latest innovations at “Heart and Brain” Hospital – iMRI, which is the world's leading technology in brain tumor surgery.

The press conference was attended by the representative of the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria and Chairman of the Municipal Council of Pleven, Martin Mitev. He said that more than 70 municipalities participated in the campaign by providing facilities for examinations in cities and towns. “We value that mobile teams for highly specialized cardiac care will reach everywhere in the country,” added Martin Mitev. Paulina Kirova, Secretary of the Municipality of Pleven and also a representative of the National Association of Municipalities, participated in the event as well.



CANDIDATE STUDENT CAMPAIGN 2018

Once again this year, the Medical University – Pleven launched its admissions campaign in early January with preparatory courses in Biology and Chemistry on Saturdays and Sundays. The courses were organized to aid those applying for the "Medicine" and "Pharmacy" degree programs and will continue until March 18th. The preparatory courses are conducted by Biology and Chemistry university lecturers. The two high school-level courses run for 60 academic hours. The Biology course deals with solving and discussing example tests for the 8, 9 and 10 grade. In the Chemistry course, the candidate students will receive instructions for solving sample problems included in the "Chemistry Handbook for Candidate Students" - an MU – Pleven edition.

In order to provide more aid to the candidate students, Medical University – Pleven organized distance preliminary examinations for the first time this year for the Bachelor's degree programs. The examinations took place in Montana and Vidin on February 24th at 10.00 am at the "Dr. Stamen Iliev" Hospital in Montana and on 10 March at 10.00 am in the conference hall of Hotel "Rovno", Vidin. The two cities were selected because of the high number of candidates from these regions. Application was done by e-mail and the submission deadline was 14-21 February (for Montana) and 01-07 March (for Vidin). Candidate students had the opportunity to take a Biology test for 9 degree programs at the University to earn Bachelor and Professional Bachelor degrees. The results are equivalent to the results of the preliminary and regular exam sessions.

One of the good initiatives the University has established in recent years is conducting an active year-long candidate student campaign under the motto "We succeed together". Teams of university representatives – lecturers and students – visited more than 150 high schools throughout Northern Bulgaria and held talks with prospective student university-applicants. During their visits they talked about the opportunities and advantages of high-tech training at MU-Pleven and the rich academic

life that awaits them as University students. The campaign will end on March 1 with "Candidate Day", when the University will throw open its doors to its future students. The high school students will be welcomed at 13:30 in Ambrose Pare Hall of the Telecommunications Endoscopic Center (TELEC) by 2017's most prominent faculty members. The event will include a video presentation about MU-Pleven, a welcoming address by the Vice-Rector for Education Prof. M. Alexandrova, a one of a kind exhibition – "History of Minimal Invasive Surgery" by Prof. Dr. Dobromir Dimitrov, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and a discussion with 2017's most prominent lecturers and students. Traditionally, the event will conclude with a quiz with prizes for the most active candidate student participants.

Once again, Medical University – Pleven will hold preliminary examination for candidate students in March and April 2018. The results will be equivalent with the distance and regular Biology and Chemistry exams. Results of over 5,50 from Biology and Chemistry competitions during the current school year will be recognized when applying. Candidate students can submit their applications in three ways - electronically - through the University's website, on-site or at candidate student offices all over the country.

There are 14 degree programs, 4 of which master and 10 bachelor in 5 professional fields – medicine, pharmacy, health care, public health and social activities – at Medical University - Pleven. By becoming an innovator and pioneering in the development of robotic surgery and telemedicine, the University attracts more and more Bulgarian and foreign students. Using the high-tech 3D visual dissection medical table and the 3D studio for Live Surgery demonstrations, students, PhD students and specialists have the opportunity to immerse three-dimensionally in human anatomy and participate "through the surgeon's eyes" in surgical interventions.



A skiing camp was held on 28.02-04.03.2018 at 'Pleven' cottage and resort. Both Bulgarian and international students took part in the activities.



SKI CAMP



MU-PLEVEN STUDENT AWARDED “STUDENT OF THE YEAR” IN THE “HEALTHCARE” CATEGORY

DR. KARAMANLIEV PARTICIPATED IN A PROJECT OF THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

The “Student of the Year” National award was established at the beginning of 2006 at the initiative of the National Representation of Student Councils in the Republic of Bulgaria delegates at the General Assembly. The event is under the patronage of the Ministry of Education and Science. The contest was first held in December 2006. The contest was founded to award the best students and doctoral students at Bulgarian universities every year. The contest aims to promote the achievements of Bulgarian students and doctoral students to the Bulgarian public by awarding students from all areas of higher education. Participants should meet certain criteria relating to their achievements in the field in which they are trained. Students need to support their achievements by presenting documents on the results they have achieved in science, culture, sports or other activities relating to the educational process at a national or international level.

This year, the “Student of the Year” National award ceremony was held under the patronage of the Minister of Education and Science, Krassimir Valchev. A jury of leading experts from all fields of education selected the winners, for their achievements in the scientific, cultural, sporting and other activities related to the educational process at national and international level, in the 14 categories. The award ceremony was held in Sofia on 19 December 2017 at the Grand Stage of the “Ivan Vazov” National Theater.

Martin Karamanliev of the Medical University-Pleven won the “Student of the Year” National award in the “Healthcare” category of the 11th edition of the contest. The outstanding student of Doctors Class 2017, also bearer and Gold Hippocrates award, is now a post-graduate student in General Surgery. His scientific supervisor is assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobromir Dimitrov and he has interests in the field of minimally invasive, laparoscopic and robotic surgery. On grounds of the two awards, Prof. Slavcho Tomov offered Dr. Karamanliev the opportunity to participate in the lecture and practical courses part of the project “Creating a training center for doctoral, post-doctoral, post-graduate students and young scientists at the Faculty of Medicine of MU-



Pleven” part of the Operational Programme “Science and education for smart growth” 2014-2020, co-funded by the European Union through the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Dr. Karamanliev participated in the first two-day interactive workshop in Veliko Tarnovo on “Preparing project proposals for financing research, protection and management of intellectual property in the transfer of knowledge and technologies” under Action 3 “Conducting training for participation and preparation of research projects, current proposals, technology transfer and intellectual property management”. At the end of December 2017, he also participated in a series of lectures in the Ambrose Pare Hall of the Telecommunication Endoscopic Center. Lecturers, assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobromir Dimitrov, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and Dr. Nadia Stanislavova presented some of the many advantages provided by the 3D medical table for preoperative planning. The lecture course was part of Action 2 “Personalized Approach to Preoperative Preparation and Operative Treatment of Patients through Minimally Invasive Surgery based on Imaging Reconstructions, 3D Visualization and Virtual Simulation” and continued with practical sessions in the Telecommunication Center to include virtual simulator training for minimally invasive surgery.





PROF. GORCHEV: THE DA VINCI SYSTEM SHOULD ONLY BE USED FOR CANCER PATIENTS

The founder of robotic surgery in Bulgaria, Member of correspondence for BAS Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev, told journalists at the BTA press club that a year ago the National Health Insurance Fund quietly introduced a clinical path to perform any kind of operations with the robotic Da Vinci system. This, he says, is to the detriment of cancer patients. He learned about this practice only two months ago. Since then Prof. Gorchev has sent letters to the Health Minister, the Bulgarian Medical Association and the head of the NHIF, insisting that the

budget of the Robotic Surgery Fund be limited for only cancer patients.

"We cannot deprive oncology patients of high-tech medicine for patients with cysts and myomas who can be treated through standard endoscopic surgery at much lower cost," Prof. Gorchev said. He is explicit that he and his team will not allow such practice. High-tech robotic surgery should not be used for benign illness and be paid for by the NHIF. As an example he pointed out that for 10 operations, the average done in a day with the robotic system, the Fund pays a subsidy of 80 thousand levs, but if the surgery is laparoscopic the operation would cost ten times less.

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY PLEVEN – 10 YEARS ROBOTIC SURGERY HUB IN BULGARIA

Medical University Pleven is outstanding in the field of higher medical education in Bulgaria and in Europe with its modern look as an innovator and a pioneer in the introduction and development of robotic surgery and telemedicine. As a leading educational and research center, today the higher school attracts more and more students from Bulgaria and abroad. Young people want to be part of the innovation and high-tech solutions that are introduced annually into training and clinical practice. The University has two systems for robotic surgery, the second one with a training simulator for training and research.

MU-Pleven owns a unique, to Eastern Europe and the Balkan Peninsula, Telecommunication Endoscopic Center with a simulation operating room. The center is equipped with state-of-the-art endoscopic surgery equipment, a 3D medical table for virtual dissections, and a 3D demonstration studio for Live Surgery. Students, doctoral students and postgraduates have the opportunity to immerse themselves three-dimensionally in human anatomy and participate in surgical interventions through the surgeon's eyes. The only "History of Minimal Invasive Surgery" exhibition was officially unveiled in the foyer of the center. It is dedicated to the celebration of four important anniversaries: 25 years since the first minimal invasive surgery (laparoscopic cholecystectomy), which took place in Pleven in May 1993; 10 years since the opening of the first in Southeast Europe telecommunication endoscopic center TELEC at MU-Pleven in June 2007; 10 years since the introduction of robotic surgery in Southeast Europe and in Bulgaria by the team of Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev in January 2008; and 5 years since the introduction of the concept of "scalpel-free surgery" and the treatment of solid tumors in Bulgaria and Southeast Europe with a high-intensity focused ultrasound device (HIFU) in December 2012.

Some facts about the progress of robotic surgery between 2008 and 2018:

Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev is the first Southeast European certified surgeon to operate the robotic system Da Vinci S. He has successfully completed four levels of training at the

Center for Tele-Surgery, Strasbourg, France. Today, Prof. Gorchev is an honorary rector of MU-Pleven, director of the Research Institute of the Higher School and manager of "St. Marina" University Hospital – Pleven. Prof. Grigor Gorchev is the only obstetrician-gynecologist who is a Member of correspondence for BAS and holds the highest state award of the President – Order of Stara Planina 1st class for outstanding contributions to the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of medical science and practice. In the third edition of the National Annual Medical Awards he was awarded the 2017 Professional Recognition Award.

- Prof. Gorchev was the first to introduce and develop robotic gynecological surgery in Bulgaria and in Eastern Europe. For a 10-year period, four robotic surgery teams have been trained and worked in the field of gynecology, urology and general surgery. Certified as surgeons of the console of the robotic system are: for gynecology - Prof. Grigor Gorchev and Prof. Slavcho Tomov; for General Surgery - Prof. Tashko Delliyski, assoc. Prof. Dobromir Dimitrov, assoc. Prof. Sergey Iliev and for Urology - assoc. Prof. Nikolay Kolev.

- On 25.01.2008 Prof. Grigor Gorchev's team performed the first robot-assisted hysterectomy in Southeast Europe and on 08.05.2008, the first robot-assisted radical hysterectomy in robot in Eastern Europe.

- In May 2010 his team carried out the first robot-assisted nephrectomy in Bulgaria, launching the development of robotic surgery in urology.

- During a 10-year period, Prof. Gorchev's team carried out a total of 1,200 robot-assisted operations, 693 of which hysterectomies for endometrial carcinoma; 494 radical hysterectomies for cervical carcinoma; 10 parametrectomies and 3 radical trachelectomies (organ conserving operations to only remove the cervix and keep the uterus in order to preserve the reproductive functions of the woman). In September 2010, Prof. Gorchev carried out the first, in Eastern Europe, cervical cancer robotic surgery of a woman while maintaining her childbearing functions

cont. from p.9

(robotic radical trachelectomy). After the intervention, the patient underwent a successful in vitro fertilization procedure and became the mother of a healthy child (in August, 2012). Up until then, there were only 19 similar cases described in world scientific literature. This was the first case, however, when there has been a successful pregnancy.

- According to official data, just for the past 5 years, the scientific output of robot surgery teams is enormous: 3 dissertations; 3 author's summaries of dissertations; 2 diploma theses; 11 publications in foreign scientific journals; and over 112 publications in Bulgarian scientific journals.

- Prof. Gorchev has been a member of the Management Board of the Society of European Robotic Gynecological Surgery for two mandates and has been part of the organizational and scientific committees of the European forums of the Association.

- Prof. Gorchev and Prof. Tomov are co-founders and members of the Management Board of the Association for Robotic Surgery for Southeast Europe. In 2017, Medical University Pleven hosted the 9th International Congress on Robotic Surgery of the Association of Robotic Surgery for Southeast Europe.

- A Robotic Surgery Seminar for Southeast Europe, under the management of Prof. Gorchev and Prof. Tomov, is held annually at the Telecommunication Endoscopic Center

with a practical session of a demo-robotic system and a training simulator. The robotics forum in Pleven is international and, for the 10 years it has been held, prominent surgeons and scientists in robotics have been guest-lecturers. Among the guest-lecturers have been Prof. Robert Holloway, a robotics world pioneer at the Florida Hospital, and Doctor Honoris Causa of MU-Pleven; Prof. Angelo Maggioni and Prof. Ottavio De Cobelli from Milan; Prof. Arnold Advincula from the USA, Prof. Jan Persson from Sweden and others.

- This year, the 7th edition of the School for Laparoscopic and Robot-Assisted Surgery will be organized for Bulgarian and foreign students. Since 2018, the "Minimally Invasive Surgery" class, part of which is robotic surgery, has been added to the "Medicine" specialty.

- Rector of MU-Pleven, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, has been re-elected for a second term in the Management Board of the Society of European Robotic Gynecological Surgery. After a long and complicated procedure, Medical University Pleven won the opportunity to host the 11th Conference of the Society of European Robotic Gynecological Surgery which will be held under the motto "Knowledge and Innovation Across Borders". It will take place between 12 and 14 September 2019 in Sofia.

THE FIRST BABY BORN IN THE NEW YEAR IN THE OBSTRETICS CLINIC AT THE •SVETA MARINA• – PLEVEN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL IS A BOY



On January 2, 2018, at the Clinic of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Sveta Marina University Hospital, the first baby boy of the New Year was born. The boy was named Tsvetin and weighed 3,650 kg and grows 54 cm. According to hospital data, the total number of newborns for 2017 was 290, with girls being slightly more than boys - 148 to 142. The most newborns were in Pleven (95 babies), followed by babies in Svishtov, Lovech, Veliko Tarnovo and Gabrovo. According to official data of the

Ministry of Health, the Pleven region is once again ranked seventh place in the country by birth rate with 2 379 newborn babies. The tendency of fewer newborns in Bulgaria every year is further reinforced. In 2017, there were 4,701 less babies than in the previous year.

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the "Sveta Marina" - Pleven University Hospital has had more than eight years of development and traditions in providing the best health service, care and attitude towards its patients, by excellent specialists with high professionalism in a modern environment and with modern equipment. The management of the Clinic is constantly striving to expand and improve the services offered to prospective parents and their children.

The Clinic team continues to carry out the Open Door initiative every week, welcoming their patients on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9am to 11am. In this way the mothers-to-be become acquainted with the modern and comfortable environment of the Clinic. Each patient is entitled to a discount for storing stem cells in specialized tissue banks.

In order to meet the needs of its patients for more theoretical and practical knowledge and skills, the Obstetric Clinic has developed the Open Days initiative and started enrolling for its first "Parent School". Participation in the theoretical and practical seminars for future parents will provide confidence and provide experience to mothers-to-be.



ASSOC. PROF. VENTSI ROSSMANOV PRESENTED HIS NEW BOOK “WOLF SONG” AT THE EVE OF 2018

On December 13 at 6 pm at the “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” National Library assoc. Prof. Ventsi Rossmanov, orthopedist at the Clinic of Orthopedics and Traumatology at “St. Pantaleimon-Pleven” Hospital presented his book “Wolf Song”. The event was organized by the Union of Bulgarian Writers and “Zahariy Stoyanov” Publishing House. It was honored by the Vice-President of the Republic of Bulgaria - Iliana Yotova.

Acad. Anton Donchev presented assoc. Prof. Rossmanov's new book to a great audience. There was also an improvised second gallery in the hallways of the National Library because of great interest.

Assoc. Prof. Ventsi Rossmanov is a first class graduate of Medical University - Pleven. He is the creator of a method for computer modeling, creation and application of individual prostheses of pelvic bones in the destructive processes within them. This innovation was so significant that it created a separate sphere in reconstructive surgery of the locomotory system. Assoc. Prof. Rossmanov is also a member of the team that introduced ultrasound examination of the hip joints of newborns, which has become obligatory in recent years. And while by day his “golden hands” save lives, by night assoc. Prof. Rossmanov, in order to satisfy his thirst for fulfilling communication and sharing, dresses thoughts and feelings in words, and goes on to heal souls as well.

Connoisseurs say that “the words in “Wolf Song” sting like fingers in an open wound yearning for more humanness”. In the preface, Ivan Granitski writes, “Wolf song” is one of the few books in contemporary Bulgarian literature that grabs the thinking person by the throat, does not allow him to be absent, lazy, asleep, or listening to the deceitful tune of modern political sirens. A book like a shot. A book like a hammer to ring the bell of our conscience.’

Assoc. Prof. Rossmanov's first book was published in 1995 by “Plamak” Publishing House. It was followed by the poetry collection “I do not live by poetry” published in 2008. And nine years later, the raw “Wolf song”, combining harsh, dramatic and honest lyrical confessions with reflection on the role of man, his free will and karmic predestination is unveiled.

The book contains three sections that capture the reader imperceptibly and take him through the lines in a single breath to evoke the one big question about our individual parts in the endless cycle of life.



“Academia medica”



“BULGARIAN CHRISTMAS” CHARITY CAMPAIGN DONATION TO “DR. GEORGI STRANSKI” UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL IN PLEVEN

Three clinics at the University Hospital received important equipment for the treatment and diagnosis of children. The equipment was purchased with funds from the donation campaign. The Pediatric Clinic received a Vital Signs Monitor, neurosurgeons were provided with an endoscopic system for brain operations in children, and neonatal surgeons were provided equipment for functional cerebral monitoring. It is necessary for controlled brain hypothermia – a practice to reduce cerebral lesions approved in other countries. It is done to prevent severe brain damage as a result of perinatal asphyxia, which often results in serious late neurological issues and disabilities in patients – cerebral palsy, epilepsy, retardation in psychomotor development and others.



“Academia medica”

“DR. GEORGI STRANSKI” UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL IN PLEVEN IS ONE OF FIVE HOSPITAL WITH DONATION FROM “VIP BROTHER” STARS

Insurance broker SDI and “VIP Brother 2017” stars made a noble gesture to the smallest citizens. On 21st January, Day of the midwife, they donated funds to the Foundation “Our Premature Children” and the Foundation, in turn, provided the funds for the purchase of equipment and consumables for the neonatal wards at five Bulgarian hospitals – First General Hospital of Sofia, “Dr. Georgi Stranski” University Hospital in Pleven, University Hospital Ruse, “Prof. Dr. Stoyan Kirkovich” Hospital in Stara Zagora, and “Dr. Ivan Selimski” Hospital in Sliven.



cont. on p.12

cont. from p.11

“VIP Brother” stars Niki Kanchev, Vanya Shtereva, Alfredo Torres and Danny Milev and SDI representative Lazar Georgiev handed the symbolic “Big Check for Little Heroes” worth 23,000 leva to the chair of the Foundation, Nina Nikolova. The event was hosted by the head of the First Hospital in Sofia, assoc. prof. Tsvetomir Dimitrov, and the chief of the Neonatal Department, Dr. Velimir Simov.

“We are happy that the struggle for the lives of premature babies is becoming a cause both for society and for business. With their help we hope more families will make the difficulties and the battle for life only in a memory,” said Dr. Simov.

Nina Nikolova wished a happy holiday to everyone who look after the beginning of new life and expressed her gratitude for the generosity: “We are happy that thanks to good people we can contribute to the more secure and a

peaceful day-to-day life to a life that begins earlier and harder.”

“Along with VIP Brother 2017 stars and our SDI friends, we again showed that the real stars on the air shine not only with their extravagance, but with the hope they give to others. Who, if not the smallest heroes, deserves more than everyone to be given hope?” said Niki Kanchev.

“We chose this cause without hesitation and we gave our support with enthusiasm and joy. On behalf of all colleagues and employees of the company, I wish to congratulate the doctors, nurses and all others, who help bring about new life, for their professional holiday. I extend my well wishes especially to the neonatologists who struggle the most for the lives of the smallest heroes. They can always rely on us,” said Lazar Georgiev, SDI procurator.



THE NEUROLOGY CLINIC AT PLEVEN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL WAS AWARDED “GOLDEN STATUS” FOR ACHIEVING HIGH STANDARD OF TREATMENT



4.94% of acute ischemic stroke patients have received intravenous thrombolysis treatment at the Clinic in 2017

The Neurology Clinic at Plevan University Hospital was awarded “golden status” for achieving high standard of treatment of acute brain stroke. The prestigious certificate was personally presented by Prof. Valeria Caso, President of the European Stroke Organization (ESO), during the Second National Meeting on the Challenges in the Treatment of Stroke Patients in Bulgaria. The meeting was under the slogan “Together on the path of change, to give life a chance,” says Dr Maya Danovska, Head of the Neurology Clinic at Plevan University Hospital.

The Neurology Clinic was awarded the prestigious international prize for the progress it has made over the past year in intravenous thrombolysis treatment of patients with acute ischemic stroke. The clinic team managed to double its results within the last year and achieve a relatively high proportion of thrombolysis treatments. 4.94% of the patients with stroke who were admitted at the Neurology Clinic received intravenous thrombolysis treatment, said Dr. Danovska. Significant progress has been made in shortening the time from entering the Emergency Ward to the start of intravenous thrombolysis treatment, which is an established criterion for assessing the readiness of hospitals for intravenous thrombolysis treatment. In 54.5% of patients receiving this type of treatment, the start time of the thrombolysis treatment is less than 60 minutes, as is the world standard, said assoc. prof. Dr. Danovska.

Prof. Valeria Caso, President of the European Organization for Strokes was an official guest of the event. Prof. Caso noted that brain strokes are becoming a pandemic threatening mostly people between 20 and 64 years of age. In order to reduce the consequences of stroke on society it is necessary to raise people's awareness of stroke and improve emergency care to increase the chance of patients with stroke to receive modern, specific intravenous thrombolysis

treatment within 3 hours of the onset of initial symptoms of the disease. Thanks to the good organization and enthusiasm of the Neurology Clinic team, serious progress has been made in the treatment of patients with acute ischemic stroke. The next important step in the complex treatment of patients with stroke is the creation of a modern high-tech center with the potential for thrombectomy and endovascular treatment. Unfortunately, only 4 such high-tech centers are located in Bulgaria and all of them are far away from Plevan, making them inaccessible to stroke patients from the Plevan region. We are very much hoping that such high-tech centers for complex stroke treatment will be established to provide equal treatment opportunity to the region's population.

During the meeting, the neuroscientists were also acquainted with the changes in the National Consensus for the Treatment of Stroke Patients, according to the global guideline requirements and corrections. The achievements of leading clinics and hospitals in the country, which apply current specific treatment of stroke patients, namely intravenous thrombolysis and high-tech endovascular treatment were presented, added Prof. Danovska.

The patient's relatives and the time window the patient has to be hospitalized

Age is the leading risk factor for a stroke and that cannot be changed, said assoc. prof. Dr Danovska. It is an unfortunate truth that the population in the region is aging, which inevitably affects the growing number of stroke patients at an advanced age.

Timely recognition of the first symptoms of stroke and making an emergency call is an important in intravenous thrombolysis treatment in the so-called therapeutic window of 4 and a half hours. A tentative and easy-to-read chart of initial stroke symptoms has been developed in order to raise

cont. on p.13

cont. from p.12

awareness. Any facial distortion, difficulty in or speech disorder, weakness or numbness in the arm implies a stroke and require an emergency call. After that it is up to the operator to provide as quickly as possible a medical team to confirm or reject the likelihood of stroke. The next step is for the patient to be transported to a healthcare facility that has methods for diagnosing and conducting intravenous thrombolysis treatment. Stroke does not discriminate, it affects people of all ages, and patients have the right to be diagnosed promptly and receive the best treatment.

There is still a problem with recognizing the symptoms of stroke and the exact time of their occurrence, as well as with priority transport to the nearest hospital, explains assoc. prof. Dr. Danovska. There were meetings held with emergency teams about shortening transportation time from the patient's home to a hospital which can provide thrombolysis treatment. There are also many campaigns to raise awareness in patients and their relatives about identifying the first symptoms of stroke and timely emergency calls.

I can say that we collaborate well with CEMA teams, and

with our colleagues from the Emergency Ward. Everyone is particularly careful when they receive a call about a stroke patient. Our aim is to provide globally approved treatment within the first three hours of the onset of stroke symptoms. It is necessary to know that the earlier the intravenous thrombolysis treatment is performed, the more successful it is and the greater the patient's chance to survive the stroke with less neurological deficit, emphasized assoc. prof. Dr. Maya Danovska.

Pleven is located in the central part of the region and 45 minutes are enough to transport a patient to the Emergency Ward and from there to the Neurology Clinic. Pleven University Hospital has an established framework which ensures a high rate of success. This would not have been the case if it were not for the young people who believed in the seemingly hopeless cause of providing an opportunity to treat strokes in a way that reduces mortality and disability rates. The right approach and benefit-risk assessment, as well as teamwork and a constant race against time are key for the success.



MU-PLEVEN STUDENTS AND LECTURERS TO TAKE PART IN LARGE-SCALE INTERNATIONAL STUDY

A large-scale international study, organized by EuroSurg, was launched in January to study the duration of recovery for patients undergoing colorectal surgery and the effect of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs on the healing process. It will run in three periods, each lasting one month. Students from more than 100 medical institutions in more than 20 countries across Europe and Australia will be able to collaborate in the international study. Gathering information and comparing data from all over the world will provide for a valuable exchange of experience and knowledge amongst students and post-graduate surgeons. This will lay the grounds for an understanding and awareness of the importance of research in treating patients.

Three cities in Bulgaria will be included in the international survey with Pleven being one of them. This will be the first participation in such a large project for MU-Pleven students. Patient observation will be carried out at the Clinic of Oncological Surgery, Coloproctology and Purulent-Septic Surgery Ward at the "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital – Pleven and at the Abdominal Surgery Department at St. Marina University Hospital in Pleven. Five teams of students, under the guidance of assoc. prof. Dr. Dobromir Dimitrov and assoc. prof. Dr. Sergey Iliev, will observe the patients' postoperative period closely, gathering data for the study.



MU-PLEVEN IS ONE OF TOP 5 INSTITUTIONS WHERE MOST STUDENTS HAVE COMPLETED PRACTICES ON PROJECT "STUDENT PRACTICES"

Project BG05M2OP001-2.002-0001 "Student Practices – Phase 1" implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science, funded under the "Science and Education for Smart Growth" Operational Program 2014-2020 aims to increase the practical focus of higher education and the flexibility of graduates to labor market dynamics. Its realization creates conditions for building stable partnerships

between educational institutions and employers, which is extremely important for the further development of the country's economy. Through practices in a real working environment during their studies at higher education institutions, students receive new knowledge and skills in the subject they are trained. These practical skills and competences help them in finding employment after

graduation.

More than 30,000 students have successfully completed their practical training on the Project. There are over 73,000 registered students and over 35,000 students with a contract for practical training.

The 5 higher education institutions with the most students who have completed their practice are the University of Sofia and

cont. on p.14

cont. from p.13

Plovdiv University with more than 2300, University of National and World Economy – 1900, Southwestern University – 1800 and Veliko Tarnovo University – 1645.

The five professional fields in which students have successfully completed their practices are: “Economics” – 4693, “Law” – 2461, “Pedagogy” – 2021, “Administration and Management” – 1869, and “Medicine” – 1674.

The five institutions where students have done their practices are the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), which has enabled more than 2,000 students to successfully complete their practice at its institutes, structural units and libraries.; “St. Marina” Hospital in Varna – 444 students; “Dr. Georgi Stranski” University Hospital in Pleven – 370 students; Municipality of Plovdiv, Municipal enterprise “Tourism” – 300 students; and Military Medical Academy in Sofia – 266 students.

By the decision of the Monitoring Committee of the “Science and Education for Smart Growth” Operational Program 2014-2020 of 13.10.2017, the implementation period of Project BG05M20P001-2.002-0001 “Student Practices - Phase 1” is to be extended until **29.09.2018** with a further 10,000 students expected to complete their practical training in a real work environment. All students enrolled in the Register of students, maintained by the Ministry of Education and Science, are eligible for participation in the Project. Employers and students wishing to participate in the project can register at: <https://praktiki.mon.bg/sp/>.

Practical training is considered successful if it has been conducted in a real work environment within 240 astronomical hours. Upon completion of the student's practice, a scholarship of BGN 480 is paid.



TWO MEDICAL FACILITIES IN PLEVEN RECEIVED AWARDS AT “BUILDING OF THE YEAR” COMPETITION

The 16th the official award ceremony for the awardees of the “Building of the year” for 2017 was held on December 14th in Sofia. The award was established in 2002 and is the most prestigious event in the field of investment projects, construction and architecture. It serves to distinguish the most significant projects in Bulgaria in the respective year. It is under the patronage of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works with the support of the branch organizations in the areas of design and construction.

Two Pleven hospitals received the prestigious award. The “Heart and Brain” Hospital in Pleven received the prize in the “Buildings – Healthcare” category at the ceremony in Sofia. The new “Avis Medica” Diagnostic and Consulting Center building in Pleven was awarded the “Buildings – cultural monuments”. It is an architectural masterpiece, a monument of culture dating from 1923. A skillful restoration has preserved the spirit of old Pleven, characterized by the exquisite ornamentation and façade, in the original last century design concept to be admired by generations to come.

As soon as the next day, December 15, both medical establishments were honored with another award at the award ceremony for businessman and investor of the year, held in Pleven. The “Heart and Brain” Hospital in Pleven received the “Investor of the Year” award. Pleven Mayor, Georg Spartanski, presented the award to the owner of the hospital, Tihomir Kamenov. At the same ceremony, “Avis Medica” Diagnostic and Consulting Center, director, Dr. Vladimir Andreev, also received the award for the most successful company in the 2017 “Healthcare” category. Pleven Mayor, Georg Spartanski, presented the diploma to management consultant Alexander Andreev.



STUDENT DELEGATION TO THE 70TH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY



I had the opportunity to participate in the 70th World Health Assembly with the delegation of International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) representing Association of Medical

Students in Bulgaria (AMSB-Bulgaria). World Health Organization (WHO) and IFMSA are partners since 1969, and have been collaborating for many projects and trainings since then. IFMSA sends delegation to various United Nations meetings, and organizes a Youth Pre - World Health Assembly Workshop to prepare its delegation for the world's highest health policy setting body, World Health Assembly (WHA).

This year, 50 student delegates from all around the world with various backgrounds such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary sciences and public health participated in the Pre-WHA workshop hosted by IFMSA. During the workshop, participants gained knowledge and skills about global health leadership, diplomacy and governance via sessions from experts on their fields and trainings on how to actively advocate in international meetings. IFMSA determined four main focus areas according to this year's health agenda prepared by the Executive Board of the WHO during the Executive Board Meeting in January, to which IFMSA sends delegation too. Four main focus areas were Non-Communicable Diseases, Adolescents' Health, Migrants' Health, and Human Resources for Health. Each delegate was assigned to one of them, and defined their advocacy strategies throughout the workshop.

I was assigned to Human Resources for Health (HRH) and it was very exciting to be a part of this team! By 2035, a shortage of 12.9 million health workers is expected. In order to counter this shift, we need an effective workforce planning to establish the required distribution between specialities, countries, rural and urban areas. We need to ensure the essential learning and working environment to keep health workers safe, offer them opportunities and

encourage them to stay in their communities. We prepared a policy brief based on the IFMSA Policy Statement on Human Resources for Health and represented it to numerous stakeholders in an attempt to make new collaborations and strengthen our already existing partnerships.

WHA was an incredible gathering of global health diplomats, lobbyists, academia, UN agencies, royalties, NGOs, students and all others. More than 3000 delegates from 194 Member States including a large proportion of the world's health ministers and numerous Non-State Actors negotiated about solutions for main global health problems and the election of the next Director-General amongst other topics. IFMSA co-hosted five side events during the assembly and delivered five statements on various agenda points.

Every year, IFMSA announces the call for delegation to WHA on its webpage <https://ifmsa.org/news/> and this is how I heard about the event! The application form inquires about your motivation, future plans, relevant experience on external representation and global health topics that might be represented in this year's WHA, as well as demonstrating creative thinking skills on global health issues and meaningful youth participation. I would strongly recommend that every student interested in global health apply in an attempt to bring new faces and voices to global health diplomacy! As IFMSA, we support meaningful youth participation against tokenism. During the whole process I learnt a lot, widened my horizon and contributed to give a voice to youth opinion. I am eternally grateful to Medical University - Pleven for guidance and financial support which made this delegation possible!

Article courtesy of: Ayilkin Celik



Academia MEDICA

Editor-in-chief: Prof. Slavcho Tomov, MD, PhD

Editor: Chief Assist. Prof. Magdalena Balashkova, MD

Translation and Proofreading: Tsvetelin Lisaev

Prepress: Engr. Silvia Emileva

Materials received are not to be returned. Authors are held responsible for the contents of their articles.

Pleven, 5800; Bulgaria
1 Kliment Ohridski Str.
Contract no. 064/884-260
e-mail: balashkova@abv.bg

**Academia Medica Newspaper
provides spaces for advertising**

Prices:

Entire page, A4 – 140.00lv.

½ page – 80.00lv.

¼ page – 40.00lv.

Excluding VAT.

*We feature notices and advertisements on
medical or ecological topics only.*