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MU-PLEVEN CELEBRATES MAY 24TH - ENLIGHTENMENT DAY

For yet another year, Medical University - Pleven organized a solemn celebration for 24 May - the Day of Bulgarian Enlightenment and Culture and the Slavonic Alphabet. On 22 May, lecturers, university students and MU-Pleven staff members gathered in Magnum Hall, Second Clinic to celebrate the most Bulgarian and most important of occasions. Official guest of the event was Mr. Jorg Schenk, Head of the Science Department at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Sofia.

The hosts of the event were Professor Margarita Alexandrova, Vice Rector of the University and the students of Medicine - Maria-Teodora Hristova, 2 year and Mohamed Swamad, 6th year.

A speech about the important work of the Holy Brothers Cyril and Methodius was delivered by the Rector of MU-Pleven, Prof. Slavcho Tomov.

He welcomed the participants in the celebration and congratulated the students and lecturers on their many successes.

Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov later presented the award "Most Distinguished Students 2017" for high achievements in the academic and scientific work of students: Iva Simeonov, 5th year, specialty "Medicine"; Azhar Khan, 5th year, specialty "Medicine", English course; Christian Ivanov Nedelchev, 4th year, specialty "Medical rehabilitation and Ergotherapy"; Milena Hristova Manova, 4th year, specialty "Medical nurse" and Maria Mihaylova Kusheva, 3rd year, specialty "Laboratory technician". The winners received a "Most Distinguished Students 2017" plaque, diploma and some specialized literature.

The Bulgarian proficiency award

was also presented. Diploma and specialized literature for successful mastering of the Bulgarian language was received by the international student Tolgahan Konbal, 4th year, specialty "Medicine", English course.

This year, the Rector awarded two special awards - scholarships for lasting achievements in teaching and research. They were awarded to Martin Petrov Karamanliev 6th year, specialty "Medicine" and Mohammed Abdul Svamad 6th year, specialty "Medicine", English course.



V. Dukova



A CONFERENCE ON SURGERY WAS HELD IN PLEVEN

From 31 May to 2 June, Medical University of Pleven hosted a National Conference on Surgery with international participation. The forum brought together prominent scientists and surgeons from across the country. Co-organizers of the large scientific forum were the team of surgeons, doctors and researchers at First Surgical Clinic, University Hospital "Dr. Georgi Stranski" - Pleven, together with the *Bulgarian Surgical Society*. Prof. Dr. Dimitar Stoykov was the Chairman of the Organizing Committee while Honorary Presidents were: Acad. Damyan Damyanov; Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev; Prof. Slavcho Tomov - Rector of Medical



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University - Pleven as well as Prof. Georgi Todorov. The topic of this year's conference was "Complications of conventional, laparoscopic and robotic surgery. Expertise of surgical cases as examined in courts of law."

The official opening of the conference was on May 31 in Rostov Hotel. The Regional Governor of Pleven, Miroslav Petrov, welcomed the participants and expressed his vision for the scientific event and the present and future state of Medicine in Pleven.

The President of BMA, Dr. Ventzislav Grozev, was very appreciative of the organization and the chosen topic at the Conference. He addressed the organizers thusly: "Thank you for organizing a conference that raises the authority not only of the surgical guild but of the entire medical profession."

The President of the Bulgarian Surgical Society, Prof. Georgi Todorov noted that the chosen subject is extremely important because it covers the current trends in surgery: "For the purpose of avoiding complications and reducing

their frequency, we need to discuss them," Prof. Todorov pointed out.

The scientific conference program started with a plenary session on 01 June in the Telecommunication Endoscopic Center at MU-Pleven. Leading speakers were Acad. Damian Damyanov, Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev and Prof. Slavcho Tomov.

Acad. Damyan Damyanov acquainted the audience with the most common complications and errors in conventional and laparoscopic surgery while Prof. Tomov focused on the complications of minimally invasive gynecological surgery. Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev presented the topic of "Total peritoneal mesometrial resection for malignant diseases of the uterus".

Plenary lectures were delivered by Professor Krassimir Ivanov, Rector of Medical University - Varna; one of the leading transplantologists - Prof. Nikola Vladov, as well as Prof. Violeta Dimitrova and Prof. Radoslav Gaydarski.

Within the eight scientific sessions of the Conference, over 67 reports were presented by the participants. Besides the rich scientific program, an interesting social program was also provided for them, including a visit to the *Panorama of Pleven Epopee 1877, Iliya Beshkov Gallery, Kailaka Park* and others.



CIRM "ST. ELISAVETA" ORGANIZED A PARTY ON 1 JUNE FOR THE IN VITRO CHILDREN

On June 1 - World Children's Day, nearly 200 children conceived in vitro or through other reproductive therapy, gathered at the site in front of the *Iliya Beshkov Art Gallery, Pleven*. The In Vitro Center or *Clinical Institute for Reproductive Medicine (CIRM) "St. Elisaveta"* organized this day for eighth consecutive year as a children's holiday for all

of their children. Families from the whole country - Sofia, Varna, Ruse, Razgrad, Montana, Silistra, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Nessebar, Burgas, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Pernik, Troyan, Veliko Tarnovo and Pleven came. They brought their offspring in both single and double strollers! The site in front of the art gallery became a scene of joy,



happiness and dreams come true. The children - both very young and adolescent - sang and danced together with *Saglasie Chitalishte's* children's vocal group "Arlekino" with conductor Violeta Boyanova and DJ El Capitano



for an hour and a half. The holiday ended with a Bulgarian *horo* (traditional round dance), which was attended by parents, children and the team of CIRM-Pleven.

This year, the celebration at the city center was honored by the Mayor of Pleven - Georg Spartanski. He congratulated the parents and their children on the happy occasion and wished them to be "always happy and smiling, growing up in games and fun activities."

The Mayor also took his time to thank the team of the CIRM - Pleven and Dr. Emiliana Konova, Head of the Center personally for the wonderful initiative because, in his words, children need constant care, love and attention: "Children are our future, they are our joy and pride, we must take care of them first and everything else can follow," Georg Spartanski added.

**THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE AT MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - PLEVEN
WON A PROJECT FOR "SCIENCE AND EDUCATION FOR INTELLIGENT GROWTH"
OPERATIONAL PROGRAM, 2014-2020**

The Faculty of Medicine at the Medical University of Pleven won a project under the "Science and Education for Intelligent Growth" Operational Program 2014-2020, co-funded by the European Union through the European Structural and Investment Funds. The University signed a contract № BG05M2OP001-2.009-0031-C01 for the realization of the project "Creation of an educational center for doctoral students, post-doctoral students, post-graduate students and young scientists at the Faculty of Medicine, MU-Pleven". The grant for the project amounts to BGN 695,631.34 and the implementation period is set at 24 months - until 31.12.2018.

While presenting the project, a press conference took place on June 13 in the BTA press club – Pleven. The conference was attended by Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Rector of MU - Pleven as well as the project management and implementation team - Dr. Maria Sredkova, project Head; Prof. Dr. Galia Stavreva, Coordinator; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pencho Tonchev, Research Administrator; Anelia Lukanova, accountant and Ilian Yonchev, lawyer.

During the press conference, Prof. Tomov stressed that MU-Pleven has always made direct investments with its own funds in both education and research. He further added that winning this project and its additional financial support will enable the University to expand this activity. Prof. Tomov believes that the benefits from this project will not evaporate with its conclusion in 2 years but will, instead, be further developed down the road. He reassured the press that many of the young doctors who start a scientific career in Bulgaria are pleased to remain in our country, as their career development here is much faster than abroad.

Prof. Dr. Galia Stavreva presented the main and specific objectives of the Project.

The main objective of the Project is to build upon the activities of the Doctoral School in Pleven, by conducting specific activities and courses necessary for the further education and development of PhD students, specialists, young scientists and higher education teachers. This way, a Support Center for the development of PhD students,

postgraduates and young scientists will be established, which will ensure a higher quality training in line with the needs of the labor

market as well as the establishment of a knowledge-based economy.

The specific objectives of the project are to increase the motivation of doctoral students, specialists, lecturers and young scientists in the Faculty of Medicine for academic and research careers by offering innovative, quality training and education; creating conditions and opportunities for a research career by maintaining sustainable partnerships between the University and research and business structures in the field of medicine, pharmacy and public health at a regional and national level; enhancing the quality of research by improving the conditions for training and research. The project target group includes a total of 84 people, 29 of whom are doctoral students from the Faculty of Medicine at MU-Pleven; 40 postgraduates; 5 young scientists and 10 lecturers at the same faculty.

The representatives of the target group will have the opportunity to complete courses aiming to improve their qualifications on topics not covered by their main doctoral programs. Funds are to be set aside for participation in international scientific forums which is usually impossible for most PhD students without institutional support. There will also be funds for PhD students and young scientists to publish their scientific results and prepare their dissertations. Support for publications in impact journals will enable them to present their scientific papers to a wider range of peers. Establishing contact with future employers and important research organizations in the course of implementing the project activities will facilitate the inclusion of the PhD students in scientific teams, targeting



different local, national and international projects.

The main ways through which the Center will provide support for the development of PhD students, specialists and young scientists at the Faculty of Medicine at MU-Pleven are: developing curricula and conducting courses on "Key competences for a successful scientific career" and "Personalized approach in preoperative preparation and surgical treatment of patients through minimally invasive surgery, based on imaging reconstructions, 3D visualization and virtual simulation"; conducting training for future preparation and participation in research projects, technology transfer and intellectual property management as well as practical training in the "experimental science" program. The necessary support for the scientific and career development of all individuals within the target group will be provided. An active promotion of PhD students, specialists and young scientists will be initiated in order to reach out to potential employers and partners in future joint projects. Information and publicity activities will be conducted both at organizational level and across the general public through press conferences and roundtables. A dedicated Website of the Project will be set up with the dual purpose of providing opportunities to promote the activities and to ensure ease of communication between the project management and the target group. A profile for the publication of materials by the participants of the target group and a discussion forum will also be available.

ART DEBUT OF A MU-PLEVEN STUDENT

Felis Faroukova, a student from X-ray Technician specialty made her art debut with an exhibition of paintings.

In her first exhibition, she portrays every topic she had previously worked on. Her favorite theme, however, remains *city landscapes*. Indeed, the works on the topic stand out among all others because, according to the artist herself, they fit best with and best reflect her own personal feeling of 'self'.

The young artist said she kept working a lot, looking for herself through different themes and techniques. By strictly abiding by the motto '*that, which I am*' she wants to see herself as a successful person working in the field of art. She believes that drawing and medicine do not compete, albeit being two fundamentally different things, but rather complement each other. 'Through art you can relax from the busy everyday life that medicine inevitably entails. I personally see myself as a woman of art. My dream is to have my own gallery,' the young artist admits, adding that she hopes the exhibition will propel her on her way to success.

The works of Felis Faroukova will be exhibited at the Regional History Museum throughout the month of May.



MU-PLEVEN WILL HOST IN THE EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON ROBOTIC SURGERY IN 2019

At the 9th Annual European Congress on Robotic Surgery, held in Lille, France from 14 to 17 June 2017, a decision was made to hold the robotics forum in September 2019 in Sofia, Bulgaria. Host of the event will be Medical University - Pleven (MU-Pleven). The University won the host position after a complex application procedure, concluded in 2016 in Paris, France. At a meeting of the Council of the European Association of Robotic Gynecology Surgery in Lille, France, in 2018, the host of the 10th Anniversary Congress of the European Robotic Surgery Association was set to be the city of Milan, Italy, where the Association was founded.

A year later, in September 2019 under the auspices of MU-Pleven and the Bulgarian Association of Minimally Invasive Gynecological Surgery, Sofia will become the capital of robotics and high medical technology, welcoming world's foremost experts and pioneers in robot-assisted surgery as well as a whole host of leading European surgeons and scientists. The

European Forum will be held under the motto "Beyond Borders", which can be interpreted in three main ways: first, expanding the borders of the European Robotics Association by including East European Surgeons from all fields of medicine who perform robot-assisted interventions; second, expose young medical specialists and students to the idea of applying robotic surgery through high-tech training; and third, expand the boundaries of standard surgery by introducing new technologies and robotic systems into the clinical practice.



MEDICAL COSMETICS - A NEW BACHELOR'S DEGREE AT MU-PLEVEN

During the 2017/2018 academic year at MU-Pleven 15 students will start their training in the new Bachelor's degree - "Medical Cosmetics". "This is a very interesting and sought-after field of study, which has a 100% realization, therefore we expect great interest in it," said the Rector of MU-Pleven, Prof. Slavcho Tomov at a press conference. He stressed that the interest in the degree programs at the Medical University - Pleven continues to grow. This is revealed in the total number of student candidates, as well as the ratio candidate-place, which has continued to grow over the last few years. The results of the preliminary examination session are also an indicator - the excellent scores are more and the poor - less. "Our explanation for this, on one hand, is the changed format of the exam, which allows for the target group of students to be keenly aware of exactly what they want to learn. Obviously, more motivated and better prepared candidates exhibit better results," Prof. Tomov pointed out. "At our university, we are trying to ensure the successful career development for our students. For all who want to work in the sphere of research, we aim to enable the completion of a scientific thesis, providing necessary basis for scientific career and habilitation, as well as an adequate development prospects and personally, the increase of growth and the renewal of the academic staff in the last five years is an indicator that we are on the right track," Prof. Tomov emphasized.

The University management does not expect any problem with student admissions - both in the Master's degree programs and in the Bachelor's degree programs. Under a State grand, 105 students MA program "Medicine" will be accepted, which is 15 more than last year. In the MA program "Pharmacy" there is still a quota of only 30 freshmen. Prof. Tomov expressed his confidence that the capacity of the new building of the Faculty of Pharmacy - 100 students will be filled in the following years.



UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL – PLEVEN AWARDED THE 'NURSE OF THE YEAR' PRIZE

On May 12th - The International Nursing Day "UMHAT - Dr. Georgi Stranski" held for yet another year a scientific forum for healthcare professionals. They were welcomed by the Executive Director of the hospital, Assoc. Prof. Tsvetan Lukanov, PhD: "We honor the professionalism and tireless work, the daily efforts to protect the health and life of the patients hospitalized in the University Hospital - a mission to which all present today have wholeheartedly dedicated themselves". Greetings and addresses were also sent by the Chairman of the Municipal Council - Pleven, Mr. Martin Mitev as well as the Bulgarian Association of Healthcare Professionals.

The Head Nurse (hospital Nursing Officer), Ivaila Petkova also congratulated the healthcare professionals for their dedication and expressed her gratitude for their high competence and professionalism in everyday patient care.

The main topics in the program of the Forum were related to the current trends in the work of healthcare professionals. Training on the following topics was also included: *Methods for quality control of surface disinfection; Safety when working with medical supplies; Immune prophylaxis with anti-viral vaccines; Systems for sterilization of flexible endoscopes.* A multimedia presentation on the accessibility and capabilities of the new medical equipment available at the medical institution was also reviewed.

The tradition of awarding distinguished healthcare professionals was respected for yet another year. After considering all proposals made by clinics and wards, the prize "Nurse of the Year" was awarded to specialists in several different categories. Senior Nurse (Sister) Maria



Gizdovska of the Clinic of Toxicology was awarded for the establishing, developing and improving the organization in the medical establishment.

For her proven professionalism, innovation and competence in working with hospital supplies, reagents and medical materials the prize was also awarded to Nurse Paulina Doncheva - Head of warehouse supplies at the Hospital Pharmacy. Nurses Malinka Gedmedjieva and Maria Mehandzhieva, who work in two of the most difficult wards - First Surgical Clinic and Urology Clinic respectively, were also awarded for their professionalism and competence.

Honoring the occasion of the International Nursing Day - May 12, the Mayor of Pleven, Georg Spartanski also greeted the nurses working in the municipal healthcare system and awarded prizes to four of them for their professionalism, dedication and competence in line of their work.



PROF. TOMOV WITH A PLENARY LECTURE ON "MEDICINE AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES - PRESENT AND FUTURE" SOFIA FESTIVAL OF SCIENCE 2017

After an invitation from the British Council, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Rector of MU-Pleven, gave a plenary lecture on "Medicine and New Technologies - Present and Future" at the *Sofia Festival of Science*. The seventh edition of the forum took place from 11 to 14 May in *Sofia Tech Park*. The organizer was the British Council, and the event was under the auspices of the Ministry of Science and Education and was part of the *Calendar of Cultural Events* in Sofia Municipality.

For yet another year, Sofia was the capital of science. The program of the seventh edition of the Festival was very comprehensive and included over 65 events for people of all ages and occupations. The Rector of Medical University - Pleven familiarized the huge young audience with the



capabilities of the new technologies in minimally invasive surgery - one of the most modern branches of medicine.

During the presentation, the young people had the opportunity to watch interesting videos and thus be convinced that all these technologies were and are successfully used in Bulgaria and more precisely at Medical University - Pleven, which stands out with its innovative profile. At the University, all branches of minimally invasive surgery are not simply a look into the future but rather a present reality that has its applications not only in clinical practice and patient care, but also in the training of students, graduates and postgraduates.



A REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF STUDENTS AND LECTURERS FROM MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - PLEVEN PARTICIPATED IN A TRAINING SESSION UNDER THE ERASMUS + PROGRAM

"Erasmus + Resource Teacher Training and eTwinning Activity" was the topic of the training session, organized by the Center for Human Resources Development in Stara Zagora. It included lecturers and students from the Medical College at MU-Pleven. The session main thematic focus was on creating conditions that guarantee the development and well-being of children in accordance with all their rights and needs, as well as with the values of a humane, socially responsible, democratic society.

The representatives of MU-Pleven actively participated in the training. Assoc. Prof. Teodora Valova, Erasmus Coordinator at MU-Pleven, gave a talk on "Children with special educational needs and their path towards literacy in the context of the specialized education". The workshops were attended by Assoc. Prof. Iskra Petkova, Lecturer at the Medical College, and the first year students from BA "Social Activities" - Tsvetelina Tsankova and Milica Gornjishka. The individual modules had to do with the practical application of knowledge in the field of social and pedagogical support of disadvantaged children, families, groups and communities at risk.



The participants in the training had the opportunity to learn and develop practical, discussion and presentation skills - all of which are important for better teamwork. At the end of the training, all received certificates from Milena Karaangova, an expert at the Center for Human Resources Development - Stara Zagora.



ADMISSION CAMPAIGN DETAILS – BULGARIAN STUDENTS

From 19 to 30 June 2017, at Medical University - Pleven, a Commission will be working on the review of admission papers. Besides on site in the Rectorate building, high-school seniors can file their admission papers in admission offices in most major cities in the country or through electronic submission of documents via the website of the University. After completing secondary education, they have the opportunity to apply for admission under the state order (on a state grand) for Master's programs in "Medicine" and "Pharmacy" and for another 10 BA degrees in the faculties of "Public Health", "Health Care" as well

as the Medical College. Two new programs enrich the portfolio of MU-Pleven this year, with strong interest on the part of high-school graduates - the Master's degree program "Pharmacy" and the Bachelor's degree program "Medical Cosmetics".

To make it easier for high-school graduates to attend examinations, from 2017 Admission Campaign, the University shifts the start of all entrance exams to 9.00 o'clock, doors open at 8.00 until 8.30 am. Candidates who have participated in the two exams - preliminary and regular, participate automatically in the

ranking with their highest achieved score.

On the site of the University, in the section "Admission 2017", there is detailed information about the programs for the new academic year; the programs for the admission examinations for secondary and higher education graduates have been uploaded, as well as the list of admissions bureaus in the country. Those interested can also get acquainted with the updated *Rules for Admitting Student Candidates* at MU-Pleven.

PROF. SLAVCHO TOMOV, RECTOR OF MU-PLEVEN: BULGARIA IS MOVING WITH THE TIMES WHEN IT COMES TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN MEDICINE

Interview for 'Dnevnik' newspaper

Knowledge and technology in medicine are developing rapidly, but the novelties are not accessible to everyone just yet for various reasons. What bars robotic and minimally invasive procedures from replacing the classic invasive operations in which there are more risks of infection and human error? To what extent is Bulgaria part of this wave and are there conditions for the training of the much-

needed specialists?

These were the topics discussed by the Rector of the Medical University in Pleven, Prof. Slavcho Tomov at this year's Sofia Festival of Science. "Dnevnik" asked him some more questions:

- Professor Tomov, you said in your lecture that in only two years the first 3D print liver will be ready for transplantation. Does this mean that there will be a general solution to the shortage of donors in the near future?

- This is one of the directions medicine is currently moving into, that is developing so intensely that it is my belief it will revolutionize organ transplantation. It could, potentially, solve the problem of organ rejections.

- In your opinion, how well is Bulgaria doing in implementing these new breakthroughs in medical technology?

- There are some fields of medical technology in which we are not only moving with the times but sometimes

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surpassing our international colleagues. One obvious example would be medical robotics. The first ever gynecologic robotic surgery was in the USA in 2006. The first surgical intervention of this caliber was performed in Bulgaria in 2008 - only two years later.

Years ago, the gap in innovation level and application between Bulgaria and the rest of the world was 10-15 years. Now it is at most 1-2 years and more often than not - right from the moment it is available. For example, HIFU technology came to us extremely quickly and we were one of the first in Europe to start using it. Germany was behind us and their teams came to us to learn how to do it. Therefore, new technologies in medicine in Bulgaria are booming and usually find good and fertile ground to develop.

- *What stands in the way of these technologies spreading more? Are they as expensive as they sound? Do we have enough trained specialists to actually put them to use?*

- Price is, indeed, an obstacle. The technology is expensive, the systems are expensive and the maintenance and operating costs are high. On the other hand, however, this is a technology that is a lot less traumatic to the patient, post-op recovery is much, much faster and there is significantly less risk involved. Therefore, when costs are

totalled, with the reduced post-op costs, operative time and overall treatment cost reduction due to much shorter time spent hospitalized, this expensive technology actually turns out to be cheaper in the long run.

Furthermore, although laparoscopic surgery has been in use for decades, a very small percentage of the global share of surgical interventions, no more than 20-30%, is dedicated to it. Laparoscopic surgery requires a long period of training and even longer qualification, but more importantly, it requires a shift in the way of thinking of both doctors and patients. Some doctors entirely deny this method. A fraction of the patients do so too.

But the real phenomenon is that patients are often very well informed about these options and come looking for them exactly, expecting even more than it really is. Sometimes they would say, "I want the machine operated on me, not a man," not realizing that the technology itself still needs to be improved.

There is what one would call an 'easy fix' to the problem with education and qualified personnel. We've been implementing it for years at MU-Pleven by creating an educational and training center for laparoscopic and minimally-invasive surgical procedures. We've been constantly

upgrading its functionality since its inception in 2007, continuing to offer specialized courses to surgeons and students both certified and non-certified in laparoscopic surgery.

- *Is the functioning of this center at least partially aimed at attracting even more students?*

- Not necessarily more but better. We aim to train better medical specialists, better doctors and surgeons.

- *You briefly mentioned 'Neohumanity' in your lecture. Are we ready to step in a new age of humanity?*

- We have begun preparing for that step. I do not think it is forthcoming any time soon, but it will happen. Regardless of whether we are ready for it or not. We really need to build upon and expand our spiritual and moral evolution to be able to somehow keep up with the technological revolution.

- *How important are the moral implications?*

- Morality is the most important issue. Technology sets us up for many a moral and ethical debate and we are ill prepared to enter this debate just now. There is, for example, a transplantation of a whole human head that is planned to take place relatively soon. Modern medicine is technically prepared for that challenge, but are we really ready to undertake it?



MU-PLEVEN'S GRADUATE IS AMONG THE NINE DOCTORS TO RECEIVE THE "YOUNG MEDIC 2017" AWARD

A total of 48 specialists from all over Bulgaria competed in the Young Medic 2017 competition organized by the Bulgarian Medical Association and 'Standart' newspaper.

The graduate of MU-Pleven - Dr. Evgeni Karastoyanov who graduated in 2009 and is currently a surgeon at St. Pantaleimon Hospital - Pleven was ranked third in the category "Doctor with Further Specialization". The prizes were awarded by Prof. Nikola Vladov, Chair of the Committee and Dr. Hristo Trunchev, Executive Director of Novartis Pharma for Bulgaria and Macedonia.



PROF. NACHKO TOCEV BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Prof. Dr. Nachko Iliev Tocev is the new member of the local government, who joins the Municipal Council - Pleven in place of Dr. Kalin Popovski, elected Member of the Parliament. On May 29 Prof. Tocev took the oath before the Municipal Council Chairman Martin Mitev, the Mayor of the Municipality Georg Spartanski, municipal councilors, representatives of the mayoral administration, mayors

and journalists present in the hall.

Prof. Tocev was born on May 28, 1955 in the town of Slavyanovo, Pleven municipality. He is a graduate in 'Medicine' at Higher Medical Institute - Pleven (1975-1981); he has two specialties - "Radiology" (1987) and "Health Management" (2000). He is the Head of the Department of Radiology at the Medical University and the Department of Diagnostic Imaging at University Hospital "Dr. Georgi Stranski" -



A TEAM OF MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND MU-PLEVEN STUDENTS LEAD A TRAINING SESSION

IN FIRST AID FOR THE STUDENTS AT THE MILITARY UNIVERSITY IN VELIKO TARNOVO

On 6 May in Veliko Tarnovo, a theoretical and practical training on first aid in military situations was carried out at the Military University in Veliko Tarnovo. It was realized



by the Accidents and Emergencies Department at University Hospital "Dr. Georgi Stranski" - Pleven and students from Medical University - Pleven.

The implementation of a certain social project is the main reason for the joint initiative. Dr. Petko Stefanovski, Head of the Emergency Department at the University Hospital "Dr. Georgi Stranski" - Pleven was invited as lecturer and demonstrator. The students from MU-Pleven - Zvezdina Goranova, 5th year student in 'Medicine' and Andrea Naydenova, 2nd year BA "Nursing" took part in the training.

Dr. Stefanovski's team trained the course students in applying a tourniquet, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, heart massage and limb immobilization. The lecture and demonstration were based on NATO standards.



ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL STUDENTS IN BULGARIA (AMSB) - PLEVEN JOINED A HEALTH CAMPAIGN FOR THE WORLD HYPERTENSION DAY

On occasion of the World Hypertension Day - May 17, for the 11th consecutive year a National health campaign was organized in our country. It involved 10 cities, including Pleven, Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Targovishte, Dobrich, Burgas, Ruse, Haskovo, Stara Zagora and Blagoevgrad.

Every year, World Hypertension Day takes place under a different motto in order to raise the citizens' awareness of various issues related to high blood pressure. The campaign, titled "Arterial hypertension as a major risk factor for atrial fibrillation", is being conducted at the initiative of the *Bulgarian Hypertension League*, *Bulgarian Cardiology Society*, *Bulgarian Red Cross*, the *Association of Medical Students in Bulgaria*, *Microlife Bulgaria* and *Böderinger Ingelheim Bulgaria*. The initiative is officially supported by the *International Society for Hypertension (ISH)*, *World Kidney Disease Day (WKD)*, the *WASH* initiative and the *International Diabetes Federation (IDF)*. These organizations and initiatives work together to raise global awareness of the importance of high blood pressure as a risk factor for the development of various cardiovascular, cerebrovascular, renal



and other medical complications.

For World Hypertension Day in Pleven three places were set up for free blood pressure measurements. In two of them, one located in front of the Municipality building in Pleven and another at the entrance of Kaylaka Park, blood pressure was measured in a standard way and at the third place - in front of DKT "Ivan Radoev" electronic apparatuses with built-in Afib technology (from Atrial Fibrillation) were used. Afib technology is an algorithm created and patented by *Microlife*. It automatically detects AF if it is present at the time of measurement. It has high sensitivity (97-100%) and high specificity (89%), which allows it to detect AF with diagnostic accuracy comparable to an ECG (EKG) examination.

Over 250 citizens of Pleven made use of the opportunity provided. The event was attended by students from the Association of Medical Students in Bulgaria - Pleven. Among them were international medical students from England.



Initiatives of University Hospital "Dr. Georgi Stranski" - Pleven**FREE EXAMINATIONS AT THE NEUROLOGY CLINIC**

The team of the Clinic of Neurology at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Dr. Georgi Stranski" - Pleven conducted free of charge studies for patients with neurological problems from May 25th until the end of June. The initiative is organized jointly with *Credoweb*. Examinations were held every Thursday from 10 am until noon.

The goal was to enable people in their active, creative age (50 years of age and beyond) with an increased risk of cerebrovascular accidents to get a check-up on their health. A comprehensive review including a targeted neurological history of current complaints of headaches, dizziness, reduced concentration, memory impairment, family history, blood pressure measurements, and neurological examination to detect discrete neurological symptoms was conducted completely free of charge. The review also included a neuroscientific examination by a licensed neuropsychologist on the presence of early congenital malformations that usually remain unnoticed by patients, as they do not interfere with their usual daily and professional activities. Patients with significant risk factors such as diabetes mellitus, arterial hypertension, and dyslipidemia also underwent a Doppler study of the arteries to detect asymptomatic pathological changes - stenoses.

EUROMELANOMA 2017

For 12th consecutive year a national campaign for the prevention of skin cancer - EuroMelanoma 2017 was organized. It was held under the aegis of the *Bulgarian Dermatological Society* in partnership with the *European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology* and with the support of *Avene* Dermatological Laboratories. This year Pleven joined the campaign. The examinations were carried out on 17.05.2017 at the Clinic of Dermatology and Venereology at "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital with the participation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivelina Yordanova, Dr. Maya Alexieva, Dr. Verka Pavlova, Dr. Klimentina Gentleman, Dr. Veronika Gincheva, Dr. Gurwright Varyach and Dr. Desislava Tsvetanova. The campaign was also attended by Dr. Kalinka Nedusheva from the *Second Diagnostic and Consultation Center (DCC2)*, Dr. Vania Dimitrova from *University Hospital for Mental Health, Sofia*, Dr. Kamelia Vekovska from DCC 1 and Dr. Valeri Popov from DCC 3.

**FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH HELD A GENERAL MEETING**

On June 19, 2017, in the *Ambroise Pare* Hall, at a General Assembly of the Faculty of Public Health an election of faculty bodies was held. A Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the General Assembly were elected respectively Assoc. Prof. Georgi Tsanev and Assoc. Prof. Violeta Dancheva. Prof. Dr. Silvia Alexandrova-Yankulovska, Ph.D. presented the report on the activity of the FPH for the period 19 June 2013 - 19 June 2017. She was

re-elected as Dean of the Faculty of Public Health. Prof. Jankulovska presented to the audience her mandate program for the development of the Faculty during her next 4-year term. The new members of the Faculty Council were elected, of whom 19 habilitated lecturers, three lecturers and three students. Amendments were made to the Regulations on the Structure and Activities of the Faculty of Public Health.

**MORE THAN HALF OF ALL YOUNG DOCTORS IN BULGARIA CONSIDER CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMATIC**

According to a recently conducted survey, most young Bulgarian doctors consider Bulgaria's professional climate and career development opportunities insufficient. In the period 28.04-12.05.2017 with the support of the Bulgarian Medical Association (BMA) and the Association for the Development of the Medical Community (ADMC) at the specialized website for medical practitioners - www.medicalnews.bg, a poll titled "Young doctors" was conducted among 515 young and future doctors. The questions in it aim at studying the opinion of young people who specialize in Medicine in Bulgaria.

"The conditions for career growth in our country are not

good" is what 57.5% of our young doctors believe and 61.1% are not motivated by Ordinance 1 of the Ministry of Health for Postgraduate Studies to stay and work in Bulgaria.

A significant number of those who took part in the survey - nearly 84% - indicate that the information on the current examination and specialization cycle was not easily accessible and 86.2% considered that the announced spots for specializations were insufficient.

"Many of the problems in the system of specializations are purely organizational and can be solved for several days

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with goodwill and hard work," says Dr. Radislav Nakov from ADMC.

According to him, the questionnaire highlights that what is usually considered to be the biggest difficulty - the competition exam is preferred as a more equitable entrance method for specialization than the interview. Another serious problem for the young doctors is that the specialization spots are not advertised in the same place and are very difficult to find or inquire about. The decision is very easy - according to Dr Popov and Dr. Nakov and it is the creation of a national database of all the sites of the Ministry of Health and the BMA, where all the competitions and exams are announced.

Summarized requests of young doctors are:

1. Return the competition examination in place of interviews.
2. A national database of the current specialization

competitions and exams.

3. Increasing the remuneration of the medics in Bulgaria - starting salary 1000-1500 BGN.
4. Deduction of specialization fees.
5. Doing away with the large differences in fees between different specialization programs.
6. Better control in order to achieve fair and lawful negotiation between the medical institutions and young doctors in specialization.
7. Increasing the number of specialization spots in the university hospitals.
8. Improving the quality of specialization programs, incl. regular updates.
9. Establishing a working national program for further medical education.
10. Regulating the specializations in Dentistry.

www.medicalnews.bg

A NEW DONATION AT THE PEDIATRICS CLINIC AT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL "DR. GEORGI STRANSKI" - PLEVEN

The Pediatrics Clinic at UMHAT Dr. Georgi Stranski - Pleven for yet another year received a generous donation from a French citizen - Janet Buryo. The head of the *Epjuj* Humanitarian Aid Association donated medical supplies, beds and couches, strollers, children's clothes and many toys to the little patients of the clinic. On behalf of the hospital's management, the hospital's Head nurse, Ivaila Petkova thanked the representatives of the NGO for the noble gesture. The team at the Pediatrics Clinic warmly welcomed the French guests and cooked them real homemade Bulgarian food, prepared personally by the Head of the Clinic, Prof. Dr. Vanya Nedkova. For her part, Mrs. Janet Buryo expressed her gratitude for the meeting and stated her intention to make another donation next year.



OPEN DOORS DAY WAS HELD IN MU-PLEVEN

Open doors day and a discussion, titled "Long-distance Learning - Challenges and Opportunities" were held at MU-Pleven on 18th May. The Regional Information Center in Pleven, together with the Center for Long-distance Learning at the Medical University, organized an Open Doors Day. It is part of the national campaign "Together for Europe" and the European initiative "Europe in my Region - Pleven 2017", organized by the Pleven JRC and the ESIS Information

Networks Network in Bulgaria.

On the Open Doors Day, a discussion was held on "Long-distance Learning - Challenges and Opportunities", which included experts, computer specialists, heads of training and educational organizations and schools as well as media representatives invited from the fields of education and training.



BRONZE MEDAL FOR THE MU-STUDENT AND KICK-BOXER, EMIL STANCHEV

Emil Stanchev, a student at MU-Pleven, won a bronze medal in kick-boxing in the prestigious National University Sports Tournament, 2017 in the 89 kg category.

Table tennis contestants Venice Valcheva and Tsveta Simeonova defeated the teams of UNWE and Shumen University and ranked sixth in the NUST.



AWARD CEREMONY FOR THE DISTINGUISHED SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN AT MU-PLEVEN

At a special ceremony, held on May 18 in 'Prof. Dr. Nedko Kyuchukov' Sports Center, the Rector of MU-Pleven, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov awarded prominent student-athletes who represented the University on several national sports tournaments. Bulgarian and international students at the Medical University - Pleven won top positions and championship titles - gold and silver medals - at Universiada 2017 in the village of Ravda and at the National University Sports Tournament, 2017 in Stara Zagora. Prof. Tomov awarded the distinguished student-athletes with MU-Pleven medals and trophies for their hard work and successes at both national level and at the university-organized, by the Student Council, tournaments. He congratulated them on their great achievements in not only educational and scientific work, but also at the sports field.



PROF. ATAKAN AIDIN FROM AN ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY GAVE A CYCLE OF LECTURES IN MU-PLEVEN ON AN ERASMUS + PROGRAM FOR INCREASING ACADEMIC STAFF MOBILITY

Academic staff "Erasmus +" Mobility presentation, for the purpose of teaching, was held at the University of Pleven by Prof. Atakan Aydin, *Department of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery, University of Istanbul, Turkey*. In the period 09.05 - 12.05.2017 he delivered lectures for students and specialists on the topics: "Congenital hand anomalies, rare conditions such as arthrogyrosis, cleft hand

symbrychydactyly", "Cerebral palsy treatment protocols, surgical and non surgical" (09.05, Tuesday, 12.00-14.00, Avicenna hall)

"Thoracic outlet syndrome, traumatic brachial plexus injuries" (11.05, Thursday, 16.15-18.00, Asclepius Hall); "Plastic surgery deals with not only aesthetic surgery but also" and "Aesthetic surgery" (12.05, Friday, 10.00-12.00h, Asclepius Hall)



NATIONAL WORK MEETING ON THE TOPIC OF DIABETES AND THE PROBLEMS IT CAUSES WAS HELD IN PLEVEN

For third consecutive year, Pleven hosted a national workshop on diabetes. It was organized by the Association "Diabetes" - Pleven, together with the Clinic of Endocrinology at University Hospital "Dr. Georgi Stranski" - Pleven. The Health Forum, titled "Together We Can Do More", was held under the patronage of the Chairman of the Municipal Council - Pleven, Martin Mitev.

On June 14 in 'Pleven' hall was the official opening of the meeting. It was attended by representatives of the national leadership of the *Bulgarian Diabetes Association*, together with the President of the Association Krasimir Kanev and his deputy Maya Viktorova. Around 150 representatives of the regional branches of the *Diabetes*



Association were also present.

"Diabetes as a socially significant problem" was the topic of the lecture of Chairman of the Municipal Council - Pleven, Martin Mitev, who was the main driving force behind both national meetings on diabetes organized in Pleven. The data provided by the Director of Regional Health Insurance Fund (RHIF) - Pleven is alarming - more than 17 000 are the registered diabetes patients in the



Pleven region and since the beginning of this year the newly registered cases are 1600. More than 1100 of the diabetics in Pleven region are insulin dependent and 122 are children under 18 years of age. This is very worrying because it shows a significant drop in the age of the patients, Mitev commented. The State, represented by the NHIF is doing everything possible,

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within the budget available, to cover for the needs for treatment of diabetic patients. "I hope we will soon get closer to the well-established European practices," Mitev said.

Daniela Ilieva, Chair of the Diabetes Association - Pleven shared her view that the most important thing for the sufferers is to be trained. "To realize that it is their responsibility to take preventive measures and to regularly monitor their blood sugar. This way, they can postpone the severe complications of diabetes over time. It is for this reason that we are holding this meeting for a third year. Our members in Pleven are 1450 people, but there are

many other diabetics who do not want to be members - younger people prefer to hide their illness. Unfortunately, the minimum age for developing diabetes continues to fall," she said.

The forum continued with a lecture cycle. Prof. Dimitar Gospodinov - Head of the Clinic of Skin and Venereal Diseases at University Hospital - Pleven presented a lecture titled "Skin changes in *diabetes mellitus*". "This is a big problem - if we consider the relationship between diabetes and the typical skin disease '*psoriasis*'. It is estimated that nearly 60% of psoriasis patients are at risk of developing diabetes after 10 years," said Prof.

Gospodinov.

Assoc. Prof. Katya Todorova, Head of the Clinic of Endocrinology at the University Hospital "Dr. G. Stranski" - Pleven presented to the audience the topic of "*Complications of Diabetes. Contemporary Opportunities for Prevention and Treatment of Diabetes*". Dr. Ginka Raianova, Dr. Katya Hinkova, Dr. Silvia Ganeva and Clinical Psychologist Dr. Elena Parvanova - all from the *Department of Cardiology, Pulmonology and Endocrinology* at the Medical University in Pleven took part in the lecture cycle.



THE CAREER CENTER AT MU-PLEVEN HOSTS A MEETING WITH EMPLOYERS

On May 18, 2017, MU-Pleven hosted the traditional meeting with employers of medical specialists. It is organized by the Career Development Center.

Heads of medical institutions from different regions of Bulgaria gathered in the Asclepius Hall in the University.

There were students attending their last year of courses in Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery, Medical rehabilitation and Ergotherapy, X-ray technician and Medical Laboratory Technician.

The purpose of the meeting was for the students who are ending their training this year and their potential

employers to exchange useful information on the state of the labor market in the fields of "Medicine" and "Health Care"; about the working conditions and the salary offered. Each of the employers presented their health care institution or facility and explained the requirements of the staff that works in it.



MU-PLEVEN TOOK PART IN THE EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK

Students and lecturers from Medical University - Pleven actively participated in the European Mobility Week - MOVE Week. The events organized by them are part of the University's campaign aimed at informing and promoting regular sports and other physical activities.

At the initiative of the Student Council at MU-Pleven, students from the second year of BA program "Nursing" and from the 3rd year MA program "Medicine", visited the "Open Doors of Training in Taekwon-Do" in Spartak Hall. They took part in an open-air activity with the *Atila* club's taekwonders.

The implemented initiatives are under the *FRESH Project*, 2016-2018, funded by the European Commission under the *Horizon 2020 Program - Maria Sklodowska-Curie*. It is a two-year project, which is managed by the Center for European Integration and International Cooperation at MU-Pleven. It is in its second phase of implementation, in which the 2017 European Researchers' Night is to be organized as well as some additional supporting activities. The event will take place on the last Friday of September, at the exactly same time in over 300 European cities. The 'Night' will be filled with many and varied initiatives.

Organizers plan the activities to be designed especially for young people and targeted groups with reduced mobility.



VI LAPAROSCOPIC AND ROBOTIC SURGERY SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS IS BEING ORGANIZED IN THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - PLEVEN

For the sixth time in the Telecommunication Endoscopic Center (TELEC) of MU-Pleven on 9 and 10 November 2017 a Laparoscopic and Robotic Surgery School will be organized for students. The organizers are the students from the Clinic of Oncologic Surgery, headed by Prof. Dr. Dobromir Dimitrov, MD. Students can join the School as active or passive participants. The forum will be held in English.

Registration is open and will continue until 15.09.2017.

More information can be found on the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/lapsurgschool/>

Sign up at: <http://form.jotform.com/70817580884366>

MU-PLEVEN SHOWCASED ITS EDUCATIONAL PROFILE IN THE FIELD OF PHARMACY ON THE ANNUAL PHARMACEUTICAL DAYS IN THE CITY OF RUSE

From 23rd to 25th June, 2017, Ruse was the host of the annual Pharmaceutical Days, organized by the Bulgarian Pharmaceutical Union. For the first time, representatives of MU-Pleven attended the event – both students and members of the academic body – in order to showcase the activities of the youngest faculty at the University – the Faculty of Pharmacy.

The representatives from MU-Pleven lead by Assoc. Prof. Nadya Veleva were welcomed warmly and were the focus of attention by high-school seniors, potential student-candidates, parents and employers in the field of pharmacy. MU-Pleven's representatives took this opportunity to familiarize those interested with the competitiveness of MU-Pleven's new Faculty of Pharmacy on the job market and to emphasize the focus of the Faculty on quality education, establishing a complex ambulatory medical and pharmaceutical assistance as well as meeting the prospective needs of the job market for specialists in pharmaceutical production and manufacturing, clinic trials, pharmaceutical marketing, registration procedures, pharmaceutical technology assessment, etc.

The most interesting news for the practical dimension of the training in Pharmacy was the one about mini production line to be established at the Faculty of Pharmacy, which will showcase the whole production process – from inception until finished product and has a capacity of 10000 units per minute. MU-Pleven's representatives also made many useful contacts with their peers from around the country – in both Bulgarian Pharmaceutical Union and the various higher education institutions present at the forum.



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