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SERGS 

**11** th Annual  
SERGS MEETING  
September 12-14, 2019 ► Sofia, Bulgaria



INTERNATIONAL DAY 2017



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## MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - PLEVEN WILL HOST THE EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON ROBOTED GYNECOLOGICAL SURGERY, SERGS, IN SEPTEMBER 2019 IN SOFIA

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At the invitation of the Association of Robotic Surgery for South East Europe SEERSS Prof. Grigor Gorchev, Director of the Research Institute, and Prof. Slavcho Tomov, Rector of the Medical University - Pleven (MU-Pleven), took part with plenary reports at the VI Congress on Robotics for Southeast Europe. Prof. Gorchev and Prof. Tomov are founding members of SEERSS Association for Robotics for South Eastern Europe, which held its annual forum in Athens, Greece in early December 2017.

The purpose of their reports was to promote the accumulated 10-year experience of the robotic surgery team and the scientific results achieved in the application of this type of gynecology surgery at MU-Pleven. There was also an active advertising campaign for the upcoming household of the European School of SERGS European Congress of Robotic Gynecology Surgery in 2019 in Sofia, Bulgaria. The motto of the European Forum, which will be organized under the auspices of the University, will be: "Beyond the

Limits of Knowledge and Innovation".

More than 200 surgeons and scientists from leading universities and hospitals, mainly from Greece, Romania, Cyprus and Bulgaria, as well as special guests - top surgeons from Germany, Italy and the United States, took part in the East European Forum on Robotics in Athens. They all apply robot-assisted surgery in various areas of clinical practice - gynecology, urology and general surgery. The reports of the robotic surgery team's experience of the Pleven team provoked the interest of the Eastern European and world academic community, following an interesting discussion that led to the exchange of valuable knowledge, ideas and suggestions.

At the General Assembly of the Association for Robotic Surgery for Southeast Europe, the upcoming hosting of the Medical University of Pleven at the European Congress of Robotic Gynecology Surgery in September 2019 in Sofia, Bulgaria was discussed.

Velina Dukova

## MU-PLEVEN HOSTED THE FIFTH ANNUAL "INTERNATIONAL DAY" BY FOREIGN STUDENT INITIATIVE

On 11.11.2017 at Medical University - Pleven was held the fifth International Day, which has already become a tradition.

More than 250 students from 10 different countries - Bulgaria, Great Britain, Germany, Nepal, India, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh, Japan and Sri Lanka - participated in the event, a joint initiative of foreign and Bulgarian students and with the support of the University Management.

Inspired by the notion that better knowledge of their national differences and peculiarities will create more camaraderie, unity and will make for an easier, more enjoyable student life, in the early afternoon of November 11 hundreds of young people gathered at the sports complex "Prof. Dr. Nedko Kyuchukov". Among the guests of the event was the Honorary Rector of the University Member of Cor. Prof. Grigor Gorchev.

For the fifth time, the sports hall

became the stage where the students presented the cultural diversity of their countries through traditional cuisine, lifestyle, history, clothing, folk songs and dances. The celebrations began with a greeting from the Rector of the University, Prof. Slavcho Tomov, who invited his beautiful daughter, Mila, on stage to welcome the participants and the guests of the event. Professor Tomov said that his son and daughter, though not in the country as students, followed with interest news about the International Day online. His daughter, Mila, said: "In the last two years, I had the wonderful opportunity

to live in five different countries and to cooperate with people from more than 20 nationalities. This has helped me to realize that beauty is not only about the differences between us and our cultures, but also about how close we become because of these differences."

Rock band *Criminale* welcomed the audience with interesting performances. Their participation was the Rector of the University's surprise for the audience of young students. The band's musicians received special certificates for their participation.

Each country's team presented

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their customs, clothing, songs and dances in front of their guests. On special stands were dishes of the traditional cuisine of every country which the participants were welcome to taste.

Once again, the teams were evaluated by a competent jury of lecturers and members of the university management, which selected a winning country and awarded a prize for the most attractively presented nationality. The first place was won by the team



from India, the second was for the presentation of Nepal, and the third place went to the Bulgarian team. Two additional awards were given – the best stand was won by the Pakistani team, and the best dance award was given to the Arabian team.

This year as well “International Day” was dedicated to a noble cause. This time the students united to help the young Azer who was born with epilepsy and needs special rehabilitation. Thanks to the noble initiative, realized with the support of the University Management – Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Rector of MU-Pleven, and Prof. Angelina Stoyanova, Head of the Center for Foreign Students, 4906,90 BGN were raised from guest entrance. The sum was transferred to the parents of the child for his treatment.



## MU-PLEVEN CELEBRATES HOLIDAY WITH TWO AWARD CEREMONIES AND AWARDS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF TEACHING STAFF

On October 31, Medical University – Pleven celebrated the anniversary of the establishment with two award ceremonies and a solemn award ceremony for academic achievements of the teaching staff, during which the capabilities of the newly opened 3D studio were demonstrated. On the same date 43 years ago, the Faculty of Medicine – Pleven was officially opened. Therefore, by decision of the Academic Council of MU-Pleven, the date of October 31 was approved as the University's official holiday.

The festivities began at the Magnum Hall of the Second Clinical Base with a solemn ceremony for 145 graduates from the Faculty of Health Care and the Medical College. 70 health specialists from the “Midwife” and “Nursing” specialties and 75 graduates from the “X-ray laboratory”, “Medical laboratory”,

“Social activities” and “Pharmacy assistant” specialties were awarded their diplomas. They were welcomed by the Rector of MU-Pleven Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Valkov – Dean of the Faculty of Health Care and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Evgenia Ivanova Barzashka-Hristova – Director of the Medical College. The average grade of the graduates of the Faculty of Health Care and of the Medical College is “very

good” and the outstanding graduates of the 2017 Class are Pavlina Radeva, “Midwife”, and Diana Gergova, “Pharmacy Assistant”. Showing great excitement, they thanked their lecturers and parents. After the musical greeting, a festive cocktail was organized for the graduates and lecturers.

The second part of the holiday was held at two in the afternoon in the Ambroise Pare Hall of the Telecommunication Center of MU-Pleven. A total of 32 lecturers were awarded academic plaques for their academic achievements during the past year – one for the academic degree “Doctor of Sciences”, 11 for the academic degree “Doctor”, 12 for the academic position “Associate Professor” and 8 for the academic position “Chief Assistant”. Rector,



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Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, offered the guests a demonstration of the newly opened 3D studio for the study of students, postgraduate and doctoral students.

The second part was hosted by Assoc. Prof. Dr Galia Stavreva, Vice Rector of Research and Project Coordinator 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" is part of the Operational Programme "Science and education for smart growth" 2014-2020. In her greetings she highlighted the fact that for its 43-year history MU-Pleven has developed and strengthened,



becoming a modern educational and research hub of national and international importance. Assoc. Prof. Stavreva on to say that "The name of the University is connected with quality, innovative research, with priority in the development of robotic surgery, telemedicine and 3D medicine, attracting more Bulgarian and foreign students".

For seven years, the procedures for training, defence and subsequent academic development of the teaching staff are being successfully implemented at the MU-Pleven. This stimulates the development of the university's own academic staff and attracts new and reliable staff. So far, the total number of those who have received the educational and scientific degree "doctor" is 70; academic degree "Doctor of Sciences" – 16; academic position "chief assistant" – 18; "Associate Professor" – 77 and "Professor" – 21. Assoc. Prof. Stavreva pointed out that thanks to the efforts made by the management for a long-term and sustainable development of the human potential, the University has won and implemented 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". With funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds and under the Science and Education for Smart Growth OP, 84 young scientists, doctoral students, postgraduates and lecturers will be sponsored in their scientific and professional development.

The ceremony ended with a musical greeting and a festive cocktail.



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СЪЮЗ  
ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ СТРУКТУРНИ И  
ИНВЕСТИЦИОННИ ФОНДОВЕ



ОПЕРАТИВНА ПРОГРАМА  
НАУКА И ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ ЗА  
ИНТЕЛИГЕНТЕН РАСТЕЖ

## TRAINING OF DOCTORAL, POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS CONTINUES UNDER THE PROJECT TO SUPPORT THEIR DEVELOPMENT

The aim 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" 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.

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.

## DOCTORAL, POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS IN MU–PLEVEN'S PROJECT PARTICIPATED IN A LECTURE AND PRACTICAL COURSE IN DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING

The Department of Roentgenology and Radiology celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary

In a series of three lectures Prof. Dr. Nachko Totsev, Head of the Department of Roentgenology and Radiology, started the training under Module 1 "Fundamentals of Diagnostic Imaging (MRI, CT, X-ray and ultrasound)" 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". The training module is 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," which will take place in the form of an interactive and integrated course within 6 months. Project "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.

Prof. Dr. Nacho Totsev, diagnostic imaging expert lecturer for the Project, held three lectures in the class hall 1 of the Diagnostic Clinic of the University Hospital "Dr. Georgi Stranski" - Pleven. Postgraduate, doctoral students and young scientists from the Faculty of Medicine were divided into 2 groups, who took part in a lecture and practical course on diagnostic imaging. The participants in the practical training became acquainted with software programs, patient positioning and protocols for chest imaging and thoracic aorta imaging.

Prof. Totsev said that his participation as a lecturer in the Project is special because this year the Department of Roentgenology and Radiology celebrates 40 years since its establishment. It was founded in 1976-1977 as part of the Higher Medical Institute - Pleven, and the first

appointed head – Assoc. Prof. Atanas Baldzhiyski. He remained a longtime lecturer in the Department of Roentgenology and Radiology and headed it until his retirement in 1994.

In honor of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department of Roentgenology and Radiology at Ambroise Parre Hall of the Telecommunication Center, Rector Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov offered Professor Totsev, the academic staff of the Department and the guests from all over the country a special demonstration of the opportunities of the 3D studio, which will be used in the training of students and doctoral and postgraduate students. At the suggestion of Professor Totsev, the Rector awarded Professor Atanas Baldzhiyski a "For Merits to the University" plaque for his dedicated work and contribution to the development of the Department of Roentgenology and Radiology and on his 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



## TRAINING UNDER THE PROJECT TO SUPPORT YOUNG SCIENTISTS CONDUCTED AT THE "MARINA MARINA - PLEVEN" UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Module 2 of training activities under the Project were launched with a lecture by Dr. Nadia Stanislavova "Object Postprocessing – Types, Applications and Basic Principles". It was held at the high-tech base of the "Sveta Marina - Pleven" University Hospital.

Dr. Stanislavova is to deliver a series of lectures on the following topics:

"Postprocessing in Diagnostic Imaging"; "Types of reconstructions in computer tomography and 3D visualization of images". According to the young lecturer, the project is essential and will greatly benefit all young scientists involved in it. The main objective is to familiarize future surgeons with modern and up-to-date aspects of medicine, particularly in diagnostic imaging, thus enabling them to take full

advantage of the opportunities offered by diagnostics and to rationally use all its resources. Dr. Stanislavova is convinced that the lecture course allows her colleagues to appreciate the importance and usefulness of patient preoperative scanning. The use of post-processing and 3D reconstruction of scan images allows surgeons to get acquainted with and prepare in advance for the type, the topicality and the nature of the pathological process, the attitude to vital organs and structures, the engagement of large vessels, as well as the individual anatomy of the patient, to detect possible anatomical anomalies (e.g.,



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aberrant vessels). This can greatly facilitate their intraoperative work, determine the volume of surgical intervention, shorten the time in the operating room, and reduce the possibility of mistakes and complications during the operation.

Dr. Nadia Stanislavova is a graduate of the Medical University – Pleven and a young doctor at the “Sveta Marina – Pleven” HIFU Center, the only clinical center in Eastern

Europe for non-invasive treatment of solid tumors through high intensity focused ultrasound. Dr. Stanislavova's scientific interests are focused on all areas of imaging, diagnostics and non-invasive treatment of tumors through high-intensity focused ultrasound – HIFU and modern technology in medicine. In September 2017, she attended a special course on HIFU technology in China to treat benign and malignant tumors.



## ANOTHER TRAINING COURSE FOR DOCTORAL, POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS FOLLOWING ACTIVITY 1 AT MU-PLEVEN LIBRARY



On November 21, 2017, Gabriel Georgiev, Director of the Library at Medical University – Pleven, expert lecturer in 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”, conducted a training course on “Working with systematized electronic information (databases, bibliographical and reference research)”.

Gabriel Georgiev, who lectures annually within the Doctoral School, again emphasized to doctoral, postgraduate students and young scientists of the Project Target Group that the work on a thesis includes all forms and methods of bibliographic research. In his presentation, he talked at length that the first step is choosing a subject, then different databases are researched to clarify the impact of the written work, a reference verification of the postgraduate's work is made and, finally, a complete bibliography of the literature used is listed. Gergiev concluded that the transition to an information society and the increasing influence of information generated the need for the ability to quickly find one's direction in the masses of information. Therefore, an important part in the process of preparing a contemporary thesis is the work with different databases, as

well as proper reference research. This includes the complete information service for users by library employees: choice of keywords or terms; preferred constraints (for type of documents, language, chronology, etc.); way of sorting the information found; way of delivering the response; execution time; price constraints and more.

Leading experts are included as lecturers in Action 1 under the Project – persons and specialists with experience in the training of doctoral students; experience in research and teaching, possessing communication and presentation skills in an academic context and skills for working with systematic scientific information – database and scientific libraries. The aim is for doctoral students and young scientists to be motivated and supported in the development of their scientific and academic career by providing training in skills and competences in the sphere of academic writing; methodology of research and biostatistics; moral-ethical aspects of scientific research; project work; working with systematized scientific information – databases, scientific libraries, and more.



## DOCTOR OF THE YEAR, ASSOC. PROF. NIKOLAY YANEV, DELIVERS LECTURE AS PART OF MODULE 3 OF THE PROJECT



On 08 December 2017 in Galen Hall of TELEC at MU-Pleven Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Yanev delivered a lecture on “*3D Planning, Modeling, Printing and Reconstruction in Facial Maxillofacial Surgery*”. The young specialist in maxillo-facial surgery was invited by the team working on 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” in order to meet with the target group of 30 young scientists from the surgical specialties, as well as with the student community. Ass. Prof. Yanev was a guest lecturer in . Module 3 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.*”

The maxillofacial surgeon was awarded the prestigious “Doctor in 2017” by BMA on October 19<sup>th</sup>. The prize is awarded for the revolutionary, in

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Southeast Europe, operation that involved “printing” the face of a 43-year-old patient with a severe oncological ailment. For nearly 13 hours, assoc. prof. Yanev and his team removed the tumor and replaced the bone and tissue with some taken from the patient's leg and an individual implant created with 3-dimensional planning and printing. Thanks to the unique operation, the man is alive and healthy and enjoys a full life.

Dr. Nikolay Yanev is only 41 years old, but with a serious academic and scientific career. He graduated in dental medicine and medicine with the specialty “maxillo-facial surgery”, he is an associate professor at the Medical University – Pleven. His surgical work is divided between the Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic in Sofia and Royal Derby Hospital in the UK. He has extensive clinical experience in oncological diseases of the head and neck, the treatment of congenital and acquired deformities of the face and neck, trauma of the face and neck, diseases of the mandibular joints, as well as in dental and maxillofacial surgery.

*V. Dukova*

## SOLEMN SEND OFF TO FACULTY OF MEDICINE CLASS OF 2017 AT MU-PLEVEN



On December 4<sup>th</sup> with the traditional festive procession and a solemn ceremony the Medical University – Pleven sent off the 38<sup>th</sup> class of the Faculty of Medicine. The holiday began in front of the Rectorate with the traditional ritual of handing over the symbols of the University. Then, with a festive procession, the young doctors from Class 2017 of the Medical University – Pleven reached Vazrazhdane Square. The academic leadership and the Rector, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, took part in the procession. Traditionally, outstanding students laid a wreath at the “St. George the Victorious” mausoleum. Dr. Martin Petrov Karamanliev, who graduated with full honors and was awarded the Golden Hippocrates Prize, right after the ceremony at the Eternal Fire, said: “I feel great! For me the honor of this calling is great. I intend to continue to practice surgery, to remain here in Pleven and to do research!”

The ceremony for the 74 graduates from Class 2017 continued in Magnum Hall at the Second Clinical Center “Prof. Marin Ganchev”. Many guests, parents and relatives of the graduates attended the event. At the invitation of the academic leadership of MU-Pleven, a special guest this year was Mr. Maxim

Behar, International Public Communications Expert and President of the World PR Organization ICCO. Among the guests were also the chairman of the Municipal Council of Pleven Martin Mitev, the Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Pleven Stefan Milev, the President of the Bulgarian Medical Association Dr. Ventsislav Grozev, Assoc. Prof. Tsvetan Lukanov - Executive Director of the “Dr. Georgi Stranski” University Hospital-Pleven, and others.

The Rector of MU-Pleven, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, welcomed the graduates and congratulated them on their hard work and the success achieved. In his address, Mr. Maxim Behar wished the graduates of the 2017 professional success. An address to the young medics on behalf of the Municipal Council - Pleven was read by the chairman of the local parliament Martin Mitev: “Established in 1974 in our town, the Medical University has become its symbol – a center of science, the academic spirit, the leading medical achievements. Thanks to the long-standing efforts of lecturers and management, their creative energy, diligence, dedication and intelligence, today the importance of the Medical University deservedly goes beyond our borders.” Mr. Mitev greeted the

graduates: “Do not stop perfecting yourselves, because this is the only way to achieve success and you will find proper satisfaction in doing what you do. To all of you I wish health, energy and satisfaction from the noble calling you have chosen.”

Valedictorian, Dr. Martin Petrov Karamanliev, congratulated his colleagues and responded with an emotional speech to the greetings of the Rector, Prof. Dr. Tomov, and the official guests: “From now on it will become more and more difficult, but I am convinced that the best moments of our life are yet to come. Good luck to all colleagues!”

A total of 74 young doctors from Bulgaria, Moldova, Serbia and Syria took the Hippocratic oath and received their Master's educational-qualification degree and a professional medical qualification. The average grade of Class 2017 is “Very Good 5.27” and the number of outstanding students is quite high – 25. They were awarded an “Excellent” plaque by the Faculty of Medicine, luxury diplomas and stethoscopes to begin their medical practice. 38 foreign students from the same class, attending an English language course in Medicine, will graduate in April 2018. The young

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foreign doctors are citizens of Great Britain, Greece, Turkey, Germany, Denmark, India, Albania, Canada, Nigeria, the United States and Japan. During the ceremony the lecturers awarded the prize "Most Prominent Lecturer 2017" for the Faculty of Medicine were also announced. They were chosen in the first-ever student vote for best lecturer.



"Academia medica"



## UNIQUE MUSEUM ON THE HISTORY OF MINIMAL INVASIVE SURGERY OPENED IN MU-PLEVEN

On November 30, 2017, a one-of-a-kind exposition, titled "The History of Minimally Invasive Surgery", was officially opened at the Telecommunications Endoscopic Center at the Medical University - Pleven reflecting the revolutionary progress brought about by the introduction of minimally invasive surgery in medical practice.

The only Bulgarian museum of minimally invasive surgery was opened by Rector of the Medical University - Pleven, Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Member of Correspondence at BAS Prof. Grigor Gorchev - Honorary Rector of the University and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobromir Dimitrov - initiator of the exhibition.

"We are opening the only one in Bulgaria and, probably, in the Balkans, Museum of Minimal Invasive Surgery, which is actually a whole new direction in surgery. Thinking back, I found that it has already established itself as a classic method and already has its own history," said Prof. Dr. Slavcho Tomov, Rector of MU-Pleven, at the

opening. He added that minimally invasive surgery has its history at the Medical University - Pleven, and although its roots are in the 1960s, when some of the clinics have done some minimally invasive procedures, modern surgery of this type began in the early 2000s. "Robotic surgery is a significant part of it, and in January 2018 it will be 10 years since the beginning of this type of surgery at the Medical University - Pleven, and in Bulgaria, with the first robotic hysterectomy performed by Prof.

Gorchev and his team in January 2008," reminded the Rector. He also commented on the other important anniversaries to which the exhibition is dedicated:

- 25 years from the first minimal invasive surgery (laparoscopic cholecystectomy) performed in Pleven in May 1993;
- 10 years since the opening of the first in Southeast Europe telecommunication endoscopic center TELECOM at MU-Pleven in June 2007;
- 5 years since the introduction of another branch of minimal invasive surgery - "Surgery without scalpel" or HIFU surgery. The first intervention, performed with high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) for the treatment of solid tumors in Bulgaria and Southeastern Europe, was in December 2012 in Pleven.

The Honorary Rector of MU-Pleven, Member of Correspondence

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at BAS Prof. Grigor Gorchev, noted that robotic surgery, which is “actually the intellectual surgery is the fastest growing medical field.” He stressed that Pleven is among the leading three centers in Europe for the development of robotic surgery: “It is adaptable and abstract, but fortunately very attractive and standardized in the United States. Europe is a bit lagging, but we are maintaining the standard. The Center in Pleven, together with the centers in Milan and Sweden, are the “three” in Europe.”

The creation of the exhibition was initiated by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobromir Dimitrov, MD on the occasion of receiving the Young Medic award for 2015, a national campaign organized by *Standart* newspaper, *Darik* Radio, the Ministry of Health and the Bulgarian Medical Association. Assoc. prof. Dimitrov said: “My idea was born just two years ago during the award ceremony of the 2015 National Youth

Medic campaign, organized by *Standart* newspaper, *Darik* Radio, the Ministry of Health and the Bulgarian Medical Association. I realized that I don't owe my professional development not only to myself but also to the institution where I work – Medical University – Pleven. I decided that I would use part of the amount I received as a prize for something positive – an exhibition on “Minimally Invasive Surgery”. I had no idea then how much effort and additional funds would be needed to make this happen,” remarked assoc. prof. Dimitrov.

The “History of Minimally Invasive Surgery” exhibition includes the first miniature robotic surgical system Da Vinci Si by sculptor Krasimir Rangelov, a miniature of the JC HIFU Model Tumor Ablation System, donated by Chongqing University, China, and more than 40 instruments and apparatus associated with the

history of minimally invasive surgery. Among them are a 1967 urethroscope, donated by assoc. prof. Dr. Nikolay Kolev and the Urology Clinic, and one of the first mechanical staplers for gastrointestinal surgery from 1960, donated by Prof. Dr. Tashko Delliyski and the Oncological Surgery Clinic. The exhibition also includes a tool that was used with the world's first robotic system called Da Vinci Standart in 1999. The tool is donated by Intuitive Surgical and SofMedica. Also included are the tools with which the first robot-assisted operation in Bulgaria was carried out by Prof. Dr. Grigor Gorchev and his team. Other laparoscopic instruments, apparatuses and trocars used in clinical practice over the past 25 years are exhibited in the museum.

The exhibition will remain permanently in the central lobby of the TELEC building at MU-Pleven.



## MU-PLEVEN STUDENTS VOTED THE MOST PROMINENT LECTURER AT THE UNIVERSITY

For the first time the choice of the most prominent lecturer at MU-Pleven depended only on the students' vote. The leadership of the Medical University – Pleven, with the active cooperation of the Student Council, organized polling stations in the Rector's lobby and Magnum Hall at the Second Clinical Base. From November 9 to 10, 2017, and in the Sports Hall during the International Day on November 11, 2017, students had the opportunity to vote for the most prominent lecturer.

The assessment is complex and is based on the following criteria: the lecturer provokes interest in the discipline; the classes are accessible and intriguing; the lecturer stimulates active participation in the learning process and objectively assesses the knowledge and skills of the students.

### PROF. TSVETOMIR LOUKANOV, MU-PLEVEN ALUMNUS, IS ONE OF PROFESSIONALLY SUCCESSFUL REALIZED BULGARIANS IN GERMANY

Prof. Tsvetomir Loukanov graduated the Medical University – Pleven and then specialized in surgery at the Medical University in Sofia. He worked at the National Oncological Medical Center and has been awarded scholarships several times to practice in Heidelberg, one of Germany's medical centers. Twelve years ago, he received a job offer that he could hardly give up. Currently, he is the director of the Children's Heart Surgery Clinic at Heidelberg



In the ballots prepared for this purpose, the students noted the numbers of their chosen lecturers. Lists were placed a week before the vote at the polling stations. Each student had the right to vote for four teachers – two with academic rank and two without, who taught them the respective course during the previous school year.

During the ceremony the lecturers awarded the prize “Most Prominent Lecturer 2017” for the Faculty of Medicine were also announced.

The lecturers awarded “Most Prominent Lecturer 2017” at the Faculty of Medicine were announced during the graduation ceremony of Class 2017.



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University, one of the oldest and most reputable universities in Europe. Outstanding in his profession, Prof. Loukatov completely devotes himself to his small patients. Communicating with them, building trust between the doctor and the patient is crucial, says Prof. Loukanov. This motivates him to find time for a different project. Together with two German journalists, he collects stories from his

medical practice aimed at inspiring courage in patients and presenting the human face of medicine in his book. The title of the book is "Hand on the Heart".

Prof. Loukanov proudly points out that he is a Bulgarian physician and owes his development to the Bulgarian educational system. He did not dream of working abroad, but fate took him to Heidelberg.



## **FOR YOU CANDIDATE STUDENTS! MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - PLEVEN ORGANIZES CANDIDATE COURSES ON BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY FOR THE SPECIALTIES MEDICINE AND PHARMACY**

The curriculum included in the courses is in line with the biology and chemistry programs for the candidate exams and the secondary school curriculum.

The course in Biology includes solving and discussing example tests on material for grades 8, 9 and 10, as well as familiarizing with the criteria for presenting and evaluating the written papers of the candidate students.

During at entrance course in Chemistry there will be given instructions on solving example problems that are included in the "Handbook of Chemistry for candidate students", an edition of MU-Pleven.

The courses last for 10 weeks, 60 academic hours.

The courses are on Saturdays and Sundays and will take place between 06 January and 18 March 2018 (excluding 3 and 4 March 2018).

The price per one course is BGN 320, or BGN 640 for two courses.

APPLICATION for the courses: from 04.12.2017 to 05.01.2018 at the Rectorate, room 207, "Academic Affairs Office". Upon registration on site, a fee should be presented.

When submitting documents online via e-mail ([ksk@mu-pleven.bg](mailto:ksk@mu-pleven.bg)) it is necessary that a filled-out application and a scanned image of a payment document are attached.

The payment of the fees is via bank transfer to the account of Medical University - Pleven:

Economic and Investment Bank – branch Pleven

SWIFT: BUIB BG SF

Bank account in BGN: BG89 BUIB 7889 3118 3072 00 at CIB-AD-Pleven

For further information: tel.: 064/884 130

E-mail: [ksk@mu-pleven.bg](mailto:ksk@mu-pleven.bg)

## **AMSB-PLEVEN AGAIN PART OF "MOVEBAR"**



This year once again, the Association of Medical Students in Bulgaria – Pleven participated in the World Information Campaign for Combating Prostate Cancer and Testicular Cancer, known as Movember. For 10 years now, the world campaign has been attracting public attention to the issues of male health and specifically to the worst male illness.

With the help of AMSB-Pleven, a series of events took place in the city:

On November 15, Wednesday, from 10:00 to 12:00 and from 14:00 until 16:00 at the Medical University and Central Mall Pleven there were organized information posts where people could

take a picture using the specially prepared mustache frame and get information about the organized free urological examinations on 18.11. and 25.11. at Uromed Clinic.

On November 16, Thursday, at 22.30, a spectacular MOVEMBER KARAOKE PARTY took place at UNDERGROUND Club.

On November 21, Dr. Manish Sachdeva delivered a lecture on "Prostate Cancer", which was also translated into English.

## **HAPPY HOLIDAY STUDENTS!**

**DECEMBER 8 – A HOLIDAY OF YOUTH,  
BEAUTY AND BOLDNESS!**

For decades, on this day generations of Bulgarian students have celebrated. The student holiday has always and always will evoke emotions and exciting memories – for those of you who celebrate today and for those of you who fondly remember their former student years. Generations change, but *Gaudeamus igitur* continues to sound and excite us because it sings of youth and its transience, persuading us to "catch the moment, enjoy it now, because life is short!" **LET'S PARTY!**

*The Academia medica team wishes a happy celebration to all former, current and future students!*



## EXPERT GROUP FROM NEAA VISITS MU-PLEVEN

In the period 20 - 21.11.2017, an expert group from NEAA visited MU-Pleven for the accreditation of two doctoral programs: *Toxicology* and *Endocrinology and Metabolic Disorders*. The group from NEAA had the following members:

Head:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aneta Hubenova, MD

Members:

1. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Malina Petkova, MD

2. Lyubomir Marinov, MA, doctoral student

Observing the procedure: Prof. Dr. Tatyana Vlaikova, member of SCHS at the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency

Coordinator of the procedure: Mrs. Anna Sofianska - Chief Expert of SCHS at NEAA.

The Expert Group held a number of meetings as part of the Program for their visit: a meeting with the commissions that prepared the self-evaluation reports on the program of accreditation of the doctoral programs, a meeting with doctoral students, a meeting with the leadership of MU-Pleven, a meeting with the persons responsible for the

technical and information base necessary for the education, research, artistic and sports activities and the financing of the ASD "Doctor". The Expert Group visited the University Library and the SR Center, where they met with the Vice-Rector for Research and the associates responsible of the doctoral students. The experts from NEAA got acquainted with the complete documentation for admission and training of doctoral students. On the second day they visited the clinic of Clinical Toxicology at the 1<sup>st</sup> Clinical Center and the Clinic of Endocrinology at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Clinical Base. There, they met with the academic staff in charge of the training of the doctoral students. During the visits the expert group got acquainted with the halls, offices, laboratories, ateliers, libraries, etc., which are available to the doctoral students and aim to provide them academic comfort for work. The experts from NEAA were also provided information on the computer-technical tools and information networks on the territory of the University for doctoral students, as well as for the specific material base created for conducting research and experimental activities by full-time doctoral students.



## WORLD DIABETES DAY – 14 NOVEMBER OBSERVED IN PLEVEN WITH A SERIES OF INITIATIVES

World Diabetes Day is celebrated on November 14 every year. This is the birth date of the discoverer of insulin Frederick Banting, who injected insulin for the first time in January 1922 and saved the life of a 14-year-old dying diabetic.

In observance of World Diabetes Day, the Clinic of Endocrinology at the "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital - Pleven, headed by assoc. prof. Dr. Katya Todorova, organized for the sixth consecutive year a series of various initiatives.

With the support of the Executive Director of the "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital - Pleven and the Diabetes Association - Pleven, the clinic held an Open Days campaign under the slogan "Prophylaxis is Key". On the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of November, free diagnosis of blood glucose, glycated hemoglobin, cholesterol and triglycerides, body weight and waist circumference of patients with Type 2 diabetes mellitus were performed at the Second Base Clinic following a previously approved Diabetes Association. Individual consultations with a physician from the clinic were also carried out for patients with poor

metabolic control to normalize blood glucose. The attention of the staff of the Clinic of Endocrinology was also directed at patient relatives who are at risk of developing diabetes mellitus. The examinations of this group of individuals were aimed at early and timely diagnosis of the disease.

"We have coordinated the consultations with Mrs. Daniela Ilieva, Chair of the Diabetes Association, and this is part of a large-scale initiative that started in the summer, when representatives of Pleven Municipality, the City Council, our Clinic and patients from the Association, gathered and outlined the problems which diabetic patients face as well as their medical and social care. We made decisions on how to



counteract this disease and how to provide attention to all patients - not only the ones hospitalized but also the outpatients, as well as those threatened by diabetes," said assoc. prof. Todorova.

There were also examinations, at the Endocrinology office of DCU at the "Dr. G. Stranski" University Hospital, of diabetes mellitus patients hospitalized for different reasons and in other clinics. "In this way, the aim is to scale up detection of the disease and to further prevent its risk factors. Our goal is to cover all patients because the focus of our awareness campaign this

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year is poor metabolic control which leads to cardiovascular problems that are the most common cause of death among diabetic patients," added assoc. prof. Todorova.

On November 13, 2017, at 15:00, assoc. prof. Todorova's team held a meeting with media representatives on "The battle against diabetes can be won if people and society know more".

On November 14, 2017, at 13:00, a lecture course for nurses and healthcare workers on "Emergency behavior of patients with diabetes" was delivered. The lecture was delivered by head nurse Katya Hinkova.

Students from the Medical University – Pleven also took part in the observances of World Diabetes Day. On November 14 the Association of Medical Students in Bulgaria – Pleven organized posts in Pleven, Cherven Bryag and Knezha for free blood glucose measurements. In Pleven, they were at the pharmacies of two *Kaufland* stores, and in Knezha – in the Municipal Social Complex "Mother Kitchen". Students took care to measure everyone's blood sugar levels.

"This is a sort of screening for early detection of people with a problem with blood sugar levels. The aim is to direct people's attention to the prevention of this disease, to a proper diet, to consultation with a specialist and regular blood sugar monitoring," explains Ivana Dimitrova, Chair of the

Association of Medical Students in Bulgaria – Pleven.

The World Diabetes Day campaign ended on November 15 with a musical concert, an initiative of the Diabetes Association – Pleven, with Chair Daniela Ilieva. The actor Vesselin Plachkov, hosted the event, the musicians from the *Kriminalne* and *Iskri* and the performers Fanya Apostolova and Iliyan Yakimov performed at the event.

The event, organized with the cooperation of the Municipality and under the auspices of the Chair of the Municipal Council Martin Mitev, gathered more than 100 diabetics from the Pleven region in Katya Popova Hall. The event began with a sanctification by Father Ivan from the St Trinity Temple.

"Diabetes mellitus is one of the most common chronic diseases. According to the latest data, people with diabetes in our country are nearly 600 000. Many even do not suspect they suffer from this condition and do not take any measures. Unfortunately, we live in stressful times – always busy and in a hurry, often we do not consider the price we pay. And the price is our health," said Mirev Mitev, chair of the Municipal Council addressing the audience. He stressed that the Municipal Council in Pleven will always support the diabetic organization and wished everyone to

be healthy. He also thanked everyone who supports the diabetics initiative in Pleven.

Vesselin Plachkov also shared his sympathy with the problems of diabetics and informed the audience that he and his colleagues have been leading campaign to provide insulin pumps for children with diabetes.

Head of the Clinic of Endocrinology at University Hospital – Pleven, assoc. prof. Dr. Katya Todorova presented data on diabetes as a socially significant disease and presented the results of the research carried out within the framework of the campaign for World Diabetes Day. She stressed that 70 percent of patients had poor metabolic control. "This is the worst result compared to the previous five years," said assoc. prof. Todorova and added that the statistics show that diabetes is high in both the Pleven region and the whole country.

The Chair of the Diabetes Association, Daniela Ilieva, thanked everyone who, in one way or another showed, compation for diabetic patients. The musicians from the rock groups *Kriminalne* and *Iskra* and the performers Fanya Apostolova and Ilian Yakimov celebrated the audience with their performances.

The concert ended with the release of blue balloons at the Vazrazhdane central square.



## DIABETES - A SOCIALLY SIGNIFICANT DISEASE



Diabetes mellitus is one of the most common chronic diseases. Its frequency and chronic course make it as a socially significant disease. But not only that – diabetes requires a lot of medication, control, and a lot of effort by the patient and their family to carry out proper treatment. If optimal control is achieved and maintained throughout life, the risks of complications are reduced many times. If the patient, however, is unable to maintain the desired control, there may be a lot of complications that impair the quality and life expectancy of the patient.

The statistics released on November 14 (World Diabetes Day) are of great

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concern. Over 360 million people in the world suffer from the disease. Therapy occupies a significant portion of the health budget, with most of the funds being used to treat the serious chronic complications of diabetes.

In Bulgaria there are 316,000 people diagnosed with diabetes and 377,000 have prediabetes, which may progress to clinical diabetes unless they are diagnosed and treated promptly. Particularly concerning is the fact that 204,000 have diabetes, without knowing about it and therefore do not take the necessary measures, so they are expected to experience serious complications. Even more alarming is that the incidence of diabetes in children in the country is increasing.

The main risk factors for developing diabetes mellitus are being overweight, lifestyle (eating, reduced physical activity, stress in everyday life) and the first-degree relatives suffering from diabetes mellitus. Regular self-control reduces complications of diabetes by 35%. Prophylactic examinations of groups at risk are of paramount importance, and in patients with already diagnosed disease control tests are necessary – at least once every 6 months or more often. Particularly important is the regular measurement of blood glucose levels with a glucose meter or in a laboratory. Treatment of the disease is complex and includes both control of blood sugar levels and other risk factors associated with diabetes – arterial hypertension, dyslipidemia, obesity. Moderate 30-minute daily physical activity – fast walking, cycling, swimming, dancing – are recommended by the International Diabetes Federation. Regularly walking at least 30 minutes a day reduces the risk of diabetes by 35-40%. Research is definite that changing lifestyle reduces the risk of diabetes by 58% and regular walking (at least 30 minutes a day) reduces the risk by 35-40%.

The results of the events organized in Pleven by the Endocrinology Clinic at the “Dr. Georgi Stranski” University Hospital, in observance of World Diabetes Day, were announced and published in local media (*BG Sever* and *Posrednik* newspapers) by head of the Clinic, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Katya Todorova:

In the clinic of endocrinology in Pleven, a total of 32 patients with type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus who were treated with insulin were examined. The results showed that 70% of the patients examined had poor metabolic control. This result is critical and although the number surveyed is small and not representative, it reflects the state of medical and healthcare services for individuals with diabetes mellitus. This is the worst result compared to the results of the campaign in the previous five years.

**What is the medical and social significance of these results?**

They show that these patients with decompensated diabetes have:

- increased risk of acute or chronic complications of diabetes;
- increased risk of acute cardiovascular events such as stroke, heart attack, etc.;
- at risk are most often those who are in working age.

All of this determines the essential social significance of diabetes as a social burden that generates healthcare costs for

the community due to treatment of the illness itself, the treatment of its complications, disability, increased disability, frequent hospitalizations, and spent health resource due to the multiplicity of patients. Treatment of decompensated diabetes burdens the family budget due to spending on diabetes and its complications and creates additional costs due to poor quality of life.

**What would be the consequences for these patients?**

- 15 years shorter life expectancy;
- early and premature death;

**What can be done?**

- Better treatment tailored to the patient's individual needs, with switching to new, more innovative insulin that simultaneously reduce the risk of hypoglycaemia and maintain a normal body weight;
- More common disease control, self-control, training, and greater personal involvement of the patient and his or her relatives in the treatment of diabetes;
- Patients should seek help from highly qualified specialists and healthcare institutions wherever possible. For the time being, the Endocrinology Clinic at “Dr. G. Stranski” University Hospital is leading in the Northwest and Central Northern Bulgaria region and has highly qualified physicians.

This year, a campaign was organized to monitor blood glucose and glycated hemoglobin in people without diabetes. The motto of the initiative was “Prophylaxis is Key”. The efforts and attention of the staff at the Endocrinology Clinic this year focused on early and timely diagnosis of people at risk of developing diabetes mellitus. We paid special attention to people at high risk of diabetes or those with known pre-diabetic conditions, as well as first- and second-degree relatives with diabetes, people over 45 years of age, women with gestational diabetes diagnosed during pregnancy, or women who had children weighing more than 4500 grams.

The reason to focus our attention on people with an increased risk of diabetes is that with well-organized prophylaxis and early diagnosis of the pre-diabetic conditions 55-58% of the cases the transition of people with prediabetes to diabetes or the onset of diabetes complications are preventable. These patients were directed at the Endocrinology Clinic to conduct screening tests free of charge and to fine-tune their health status.

**On November 14, from 8 am to 3 pm, the Endocrinology Office of DCU at “Dr. G. Stranski” University Hospital** conducted a campaign to measure blood sugar levels of hospitalized patients with DM who were admitted for the treatment of another disease and are in other clinics. They will be trained and consulted by our physician regarding their most appropriate treatment.

**On November 14, 2017, a lecture course** on nursing and healthcare training was organized on the topic “Behavior in emergency situations with DM patients”. The lecture was delivered by head nurse Katya Hinkova in Hall 6 of “Dr. G.

cont. on p.14

Stranski" University Hospital at 1 pm.

The events were held under the symbol of the Blue Circle of Hope **"Together Against Diabetes"**, jointly with the representatives of the Pleven Patient Organization, a member of the Bulgarian Diabetes Association and ended with a concert in the city square, on 15.11.2017. at 11 am. More precise data from the measurement of all indicators tested was then made available.

Current statistics for Pleven show that the incidence of newly diagnosed diabetes patients is 13.8 per thousand, of which 1.9 per thousand are patients with type 1 and 11.4 per thousand with type 2.

The aim of the initiative was to contribute to increasing the quality of treatment of diabetic patients and to timely diagnose and eliminate the factors that lead to diabetic complications and associated cardiovascular morbidity.

Any medical activity leading to a reduction in these factors is an important strategy for reducing diabetic complications. Through this activity, the relationship between doctor and patient will be strengthened and that is important in achieving mutual satisfaction from joint actions for the benefit of people with diabetes.

#### What should we strive for?

UN Resolution 61/225 of 20 December 2006 encourages

Member States to develop national policies for the prophylaxis, treatment and care of diabetes in line with the sustainable development of health systems, considering internationally agreed upon development goals.

- Diabetes can be prevented by many people ...
- Diabetes can be controlled ...
- Many complications can be avoided ....
- People with diabetes can live a full life ....

#### What are the shortcomings of our care?

- Insufficient supply of tests for diabetes self-control by the NHIF. This is especially true for patients with intensive insulin therapy who are over 18 years of age, for which of the 1100 tests required, the National Health Insurance Fund only pays 150 per year. This does not allow for the most effective treatment in the world to be conducted in Bulgaria!
- NHIF provides an insufficient number of coupons for periodic examinations and consultations by endocrinologists and specialists, hence, most complications and problems are discovered late, and treatment becomes much more expensive and inefficient.

*Dr. Katya Todorova,*

*Head of Endocrinology Clinic, "Dr. Georgi Stranski"  
University Hospital*

## THE CLINIC OF NEONATOLOGY AT "DR GEORGI STRANSKI"

### UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL – PLEVEN ORGANIZED MEETING WITH ITS GROWN-UP PATIENTS

Traditionally, every year on November 17 (World Prematurity Day), the Neonatology Clinic at "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital - Pleven organizes a party for its former patients. The staff of the clinic welcomed the already grown children this year with a cake, a lot of games and smiles.

World Prematurity Day is observed since 2009 at the initiative of the European Foundation for the Care of

Newborn Infants (EFCNI) as a sign of sympathy for premature babies and their parents and to raise public awareness at local, national and international level. Statistics show that one out of every 10 newborns in the world is premature. Bulgaria is also part of these statistics, with regions where premature births are over 17%. In Bulgaria World Prematurity Day is observed since 2012 at the initiative of the "Our Premature Children" Foundation.



## PLEVEN BECAME PART OF THE NATIONAL INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

In observance of the World Combating Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Day (16 November), a National Information Campaign entitled "Breathe Free" was held in the country. Its aim was to raise the awareness for chronic respiratory diseases in Bulgarians, to focus the attention of local authorities on the social importance of these diseases and to urge prompt action to protect air cleanness and early prevention and control of chronic respiratory diseases.

According to World Health Organization figures by 2020, COPD will be the third leading cause of death in the world. In Bulgaria smoking and polluted air are the main factors for the development of COPD – 40-50% of smokers develop a disease that leads to



disability and death. A significant part, 75% of the patients, do not even know they suffer from it, and only 6% are receiving treatment. Every year 18,145 people in Bulgaria die from diseases related to air pollution in cities.

The campaign was launched at Aleksandrovska Hospital – Sofia with a free measurement of the breathing indicators for citizens. Pleven also joined the campaign. The campaign was made possible by the Association

## "BREATHE FREE"

of Bulgarians Suffering from Asthma, Allergy and COPD (ABSA), the Confederation of Health Protection National Patients Association in partnership with the Bulgarian Society of Pulmonary Diseases and, at the local level, with the participation of Pleven Municipality and the Pneumology and Phthisiatry Clinic at the "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital – Pleven, headed by assoc. prof. Dr. Yavor Ivanov.

On November 30th, a press conference was held in the Conference Hall of the Municipality of Pleven, which was attended by Diana

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Hadjiangelova, Chair of ABSA and Deputy Chair of the Confederation of Health Protection National Patients Association, assoc. prof. Yavor Ivanov, Head of the Pneumology and Phthisiatry Clinic at the "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital - Pleven, representatives of the RHI and the Director of RHIF - Pleven, Dr. Penka Stefanova. Diana Hadjiangelova presented the campaign's objectives, after which assoc. prof. Ivan Ivanov presented data on COPD morbidity in the Pleven region and explained the risk factors. "Pleven is representative of lung diseases because it is one of the 5 cities with the highest air pollution in Europe. Smoking is also one of the high-risk factors that cause COPD. According to statistics, between 25 and 30% of young people who smoke, suffer from this disease after the age of 35," informed assoc. prof. Ivanov. He explained that fine particulates below 10 microns in size in the air is a regular issue in Pleven, and according to city air

measurements the presence of fine particles varies between 40 and 50 micrograms per cubic meter, while the recommended World Health Organization norm is up to 20 micrograms. According to assoc. prof. Ivanov the biggest problem is the increased traffic and the presence of many old cars in the city, most of them with diesel engines. He stressed that the geographical position of the city is of great significance. It enables heavy air to settle in the parts, especially when there is fog.

Assoc. prof. Yavor Ivanov shared his vision for solving the problem of the high incidence of respiratory diseases in the Pleven region – with the help of the municipality, the media, the school authorities and the health institutions, several adequate measures could be taken that would limit air pollution and smoking, which the main factors for the development of COPD and other respiratory diseases.



### ON WORLD CANCER CONTROL DAY, THE SPECIALISTS SPEAK

On 18 November, World Cancer Control Day is celebrated. This year, the Institute for Health Education organized a national campaign to raise awareness of the most dangerous type of skin cancer – melanoma, called "Specialists talk about melanoma". Every year around 500 new cases of this disease are recorded in Bulgaria. The country is at the forefront of global melanoma mortality – 238 people have died for the past two years. The reason for this is insufficient professional and public knowledge of the disease, including general practitioners, hence late diagnosis and high mortality. If melanoma is diagnosed during the first stages, the chances of complete recovery are very high. By

providing a stage to oncodermatologists (the doctors treating this disease) the Campaign aims to have risk patients referred to the right specialists as soon as possible to get an early diagnosis and save their lives.

The specialist participating in the Pleven Campaign is Dr. Veselin Kirov – an oncodermatologist with more than 23 years of experience at the Department of Dispensary Monitoring of Oncological Diseases at the "Dr. Georgi Stranski" University Hospital. He has participated in scientific exchange programs for medical professionals, which take place in cancer institutes in Slovenia, Germany, Israel.



### MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

*May the holy spirit of Christmas night visit your homes so that it brings you health, peace and prosperity!*

*May 2018 be more generous to all of us and grant us hope, joy, love, inspiration and boldness to achieve new heights!*

*May it teach us to think of hardships as challenges so that our ventures end in success!*

*May we be better, more generous and tolerant and make Bulgaria a better place to live in 2018!*



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