

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LECTURERS FROM FACULTIES OF DENTAL MEDICINE IN BULGARIA REGARDING THEIR MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN AND THE WAY THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH RESEARCH PROJECTS

Svetoslav Garov<sup>1</sup>, Maria Dencheva<sup>2</sup>, Angelina Kisselova<sup>2</sup>

1) Department of Health Policy and Management, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University - Sofia, Bulgaria

2) Department of Imaging and Oral Diagnostic, Faculty of Dental Medicine, Medical University - Sofia, Bulgaria

### ABSTRACT:

**Introduction:** In recent years, especially after Bulgaria accession to the EU on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, new scientific horizons have appeared in front of the academic community in our country. Medical universities work in a really competitive environment both on a national and global scale, where the high quality of lecturing, research and medical activities is a key factor for success.

**Aim:** The purpose of this study is by analyzing data from our questionnaire to define the most distinctively expressed lecturers' opinions regarding the research project activities performed by Bulgarian faculties of Dental Medicine.

**Material and methods:** The questionnaire including 13 questions was completed by 75 lecturers from Faculties of Dental Medicine in Sofia, Varna and Plovdiv.

The questionnaire was anonymous so that maximum objectivity and reliability of the collected information can be achieved. The questionnaires were filled in between January and May 2013.

**Results:** In order for us to achieve the goal of this study we focused on the questions from the questionnaire.

**Conclusion:** Lecturers from all three faculties of dental medicine are partially aware of the procedures and various types of project financing. They express their willingness to participate in research project activities although their implementation is rather difficult. Lecturers estimate the advantages and disadvantages of participation in projects and in their opinion the unit in charge of project activities at the relevant Faculty of Dental Medicine should comprise of various experts who are to ensure up-to-date information on current or future projects.

**Key words:** dental medicine, research projects, questionnaire, lecturers.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, especially after Bulgaria accession to the EU on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, new scientific horizons have appeared in front of the academic community in our country. Medical universities work in a really competitive environment both on a national and global scale, where the high quality of lecturing, research and medical activities is a key factor for success. With regard to this research projects are a great possibility for introducing modern technologies in education and for increasing the quality of teaching. Therefore the performance of research activities through project financing is absolutely relevant and should become top priority for the management of the research units, subject of our study.

### AIM

The purpose of this study is by analyzing data from our questionnaire to define the most distinctively expressed lecturers' opinions regarding the research project activities performed by Bulgarian faculties of Dental Medicine.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

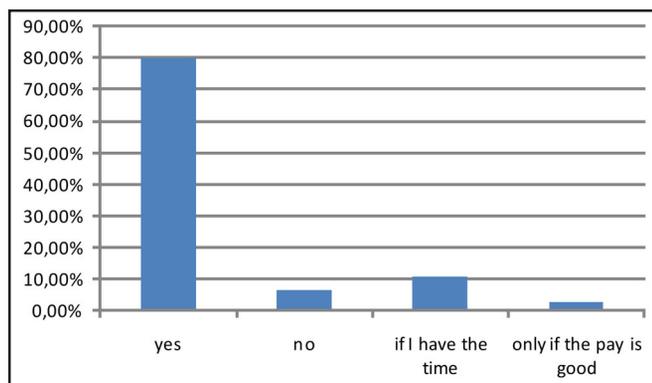
The questionnaire including 13 questions was completed by 75 lecturers from Faculties of Dental Medicine in Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was anonymous so that maximum objectivity and reliability of the collected information can be achieved. Questionnaires were filled in between January and May 2013. [2, 3, 4]

### RESULTS

Application procedure awareness (Question No 2) among lecturers turned out to be a question with a not so categorical answer. 44% of the participants in the questionnaire responded that they were not well familiar with such procedures. We think that this percentage is rather high and can be used as grounds for imposing more detailed explanation of measures of this kind. The need of information

campaigns is also undoubtedly supported by the high percentage of participants (54.7%) who have not participated in any research projects yet.

We consider the data shown on Figure 1 as a positive and quite optimistic result since it shows motivation and willingness for participating in research project activities – Question No 4.



**Fig. 1.** Lecturers' willingness to participate in research project activities

Most lecturers unreservedly express their willingness to participate in research projects (80%), though they are aware of the high level of workload and the difficulties involved in their implementation, Table 1, Question No 5. The second place is taken by those who consider that the time they have is the key determinant (10.7%) and no more than 2.7% would join a project only if their payment is good - Fig. 1.

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Very difficult	16	21,3
Difficult	58	77,3
Easy	1	1,3
Total	75	100,0

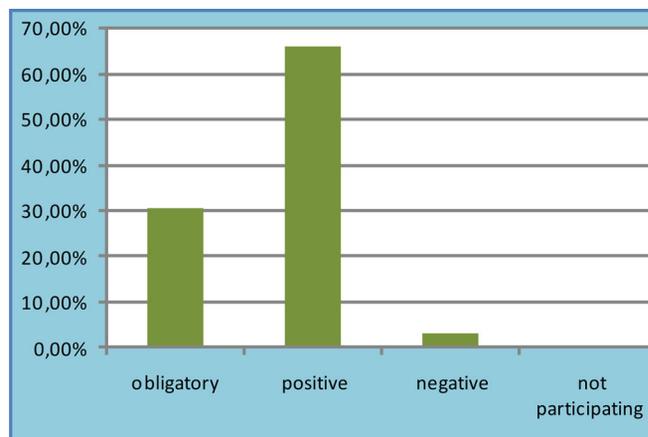
**Table 1.**

The majority of those surveyed realize that the unit in charge of projects at a given faculty should include people of various professional skills in the fields of law, accountancy and administration and lecturers specified in the particular field of the corresponding educational institution, Table 2.

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Academic ranks only	9	12,0
Academic ranks, accountants, lawyers	52	69,3
Others	14	18,7
Total	75	100,0

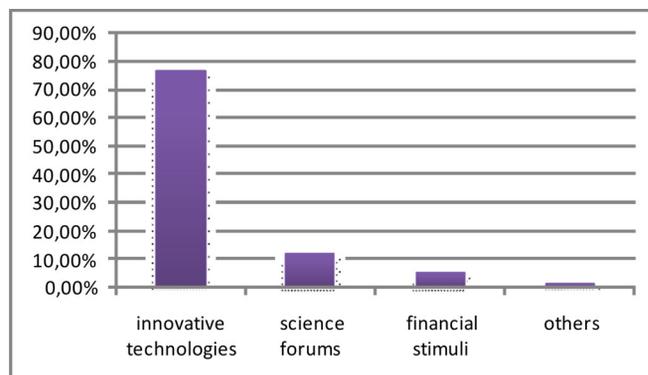
**Table 2.** Unit members

We should emphasize that students' involvement in research projects, Fig. 2, is considered by lecturers absolutely positive. Those surveyed are aware that the educational institution through its research project activities is some kind of a "workshop" for future young research personnel.



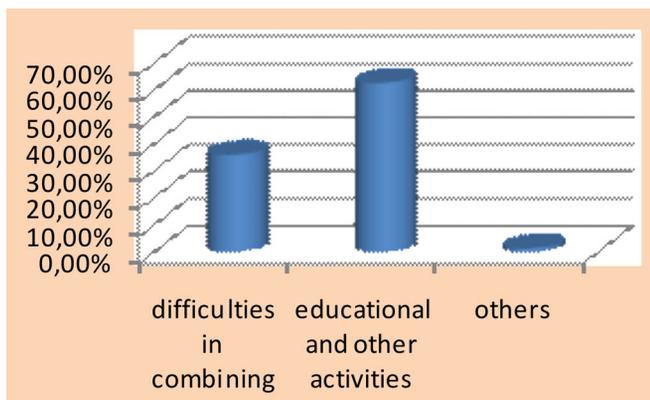
**Fig. 2.** Student's participation in research projects

Lecturers' motivation to participate in research projects is largely based on the opportunity to work with highly specialized equipment and new technologies (77.3%), participation in science forums ranks second (13.3%), while according to those questioned financial stimuli (6.7%) are not the major incentive for scientific research (Fig. 3).



**Fig. 3.** Advantages of lecturers' participation in research projects

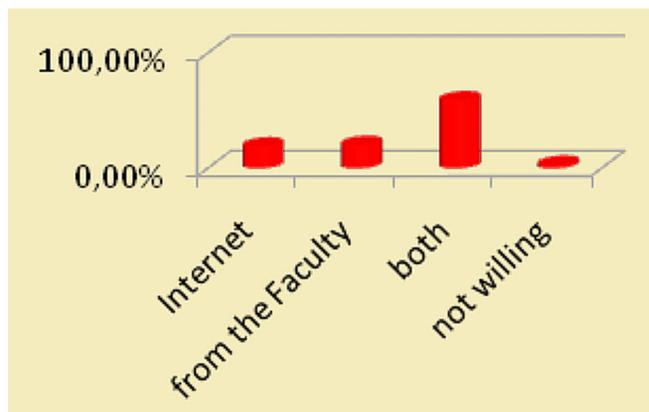
In addition to listing the advantages the questionnaire also covers any possible disadvantages of participation in research projects. As seen from Fig.4 lecturers most often point out the lack of enough time due to excessive educational or other workload (62.7%). Difficulties in combining activities, which is rather an organizational issue, also have a high percentage (36%).



**Fig. 4.** Disadvantages of lecturers' participation in research projects

The question related to FP7 was aimed at estimating to what extent those surveyed had knowledge of the various scientific cooperation programs. Lecturers showed competence (74.7%) and correctly answered that FP7 was an international program and not a sports channel. (1)

As yet another important issue from the questionnaire we would like to point out that lecturers prefer to obtain information about current or forthcoming projects not only from a specialized unit or official at the relevant educational institution, but also by electronic means. See Fig.5. Probably this preference of those surveyed is a result of their mobility and of the rational use of the most valuable asset of our existence – time.



**Fig. 5.** Ways of receiving up-to-date information

**CONCLUSION:**

Lecturers from all three faculties of dental medicine are partially aware of the procedures and various types of project financing. They express their willingness to participate in research project activities although their implementation is rather difficult. Lecturers estimate the advantages and disadvantages of participation in projects and in their opinion the unit in charge of project activities at the relevant Faculty of Dental Medicine should comprise of various experts who are to ensure up-to-date information on current or future projects. [5, 6]

**Appendix 1**

(Questionnaire regarding research activities performed in faculties of Dental Medicine in Bulgaria)

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Question	Question			
No	A	B	C	D
1. What is your status in the Faculty? • • •	Academic rank lecturer	Employee/lecturer of no academic rank	Student	
2. Are you familiar with the research project application procedure? • •	Yes	No		
3. Have you participated in a research project at your university? • •	Yes	No		
4. Would you like to participate in application for a research project? • • • •	Yes	No	Only if I have free time	Only if the pay is good
5. In your opinion a research project implementation is: • • • •	Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy

6. What is your opinion on establishing a unit at the Faculty of Dental Medicine dedicated especially to implement research projects: ••••	Definitely positive	Positive	Negative	Definitely negative
7. What members could such unit include? •••	Academic ranks only	Academic ranks, accountants, lawyers, etc.	Others (please specify):	
8. In your opinion the involvement of students in research projects is: ••••	Obligatory	Positive	Negative	Students should not participate
9. In your opinion what are the advantages for research project participants? (please specify one answer only) •	Working with innovative technologies	Participation in science forums	Financial stimuli	Others (please specify):
10. What are the disadvantages for research project participants? •••	Difficulties in combining project activities with education /lecturing	Additional extra time burden	Others (please specify):	
11. What do you think the Seventh Framework Program is? ••••	National scientific cooperation program	International scientific cooperation program	Sports program	Other (please specify):
12. How many research projects do you think are implemented at your Faculty in one year? ••••	Not more than 10	Between 10 and 20	Between 20 and 40	More than 40
13. How do you prefer to receive information about certain projects? ••••	On the Internet	From specified units at the Faculties of Dental Medicine	From both sources	I do not want to receive any information

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#### Address for correspondence:

Dr. Svetoslav Garov  
 Department of Health Policy and Management, Faculty of Public Health,  
 Medical University - Sofia  
 8, Bialo more str., 1527, Sofia, Bulgaria  
 E-mail: [sv.garov@gmail.com](mailto:sv.garov@gmail.com)