



**UNIVERSITATEA DE MEDICINĂ ȘI FARMACIE  
"CAROL DAVILA" BUCUREȘTI  
ȘCOALA DOCTORALĂ  
DOMENIUL MEDICINĂ DENTARĂ**

**TEZĂ DE ABILITARE**

**CANDIDAT:  
Ioanina Mihaela PĂRLĂTESCU  
Șef de lucrări  
Universitatea de Medicină și Farmacie "Carol DAVILA", București**

**2024**



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**CERCETĂRI, PERSPECTIVE ȘI INTERDISCIPLINARITATE ÎN PATOLOGIA  
ORALĂ**

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"CAROL DAVILA" UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY, BUCHAREST  
DOCTORAL SCHOOL  
DENTAL MEDICINE DOMAIN

**SYNOPSIS OF THE HABILITATION THESIS**

**RESEARCH, PERSPECTIVES AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY IN ORAL  
PATHOLOGY**

**CANDIDATE:**  
**Ioanina Mihaela PĂRLĂTESCU**  
**Lecturer**  
**Carol DAVILA" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest**

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## SUMMARY

### **Introduction and Background**

The habilitation thesis entitled '**Research, Perspectives, and Interdisciplinarity in Oral Pathology**' is a culmination of years of focused research, academic engagement, and clinical practice. It is written according to the 'Carol Davila' University of Medicine and Pharmacy's guidelines, aiming to advance the understanding and treatment of critical conditions within oral pathology. This thesis encapsulates the primary scientific achievements, as well as academic and professional experiences acquired since earning the Doctor of Medicine degree. I was awarded the Doctor of Medicine degree at the "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest, following the successful defense of my PhD thesis titled "**Oral Leukoplakia: A Clinical, Histological, Immunohistochemical, and Evolution Study**".

The research topics and the activity included in the present habilitation thesis refer mainly to the period since the last promotion in 2017 to the position of Lecturer in Oral Pathology Discipline, and until present. The selected research areas—oral leukoplakia, autoimmune diseases, and burning mouth syndrome—address significant challenges in the field of oral pathology/oral medicine, where my work contributes to both foundational knowledge and innovative therapeutic approaches.

The thesis is structured into four major chapters, each with subchapters and bibliographic references. My scientific research activities are deeply intertwined with my medical and teaching roles, and this interconnectedness is reflected in the thesis, where data across chapters intersect and correlate.

### **Scientific Research Activity**

The first chapter, "Scientific Research Activity," details my primary contributions to the field, divided into **four sections** covering various topics in oral medicine. These sections highlight significant research areas and publications in ISI Web of Science (WoS) and international databases (IBD), where I served as the main author or co-author.

The **first section** continues the research initiated during my doctoral studies on oral leukoplakia, focusing on its potential for malignant transformation. My 2023 publication on oral leukoplakia and its malignant transformation revisits and redefines this condition in light of new diagnostic criteria, significantly influencing current clinical practice and research, as

evidenced by its high citation rate (6 citations in the Web of Science Core Collection). This work has provided a more nuanced understanding of leukoplakia, directly impacting patient management strategies and further research.

In the **second section**, the research activities covering the topic of autoimmune diseases with oral manifestations are presented. Oral lichen planus is an autoimmune disease that has raised my interest since the beginning of my career and an extensive series of publications on this area stands as proof.

The **third section** addresses the issues of burning mouth syndrome – an enigmatic disease of multifactorial etiology which due to so many unknowns allows research opportunities in many directions. It is considered a neuropathic pain of the oral mucosa with no clinical or biological disturbances detected. This disease brought me a special concern due to both an increased prevalence in the patients and my involvement in a national research project coordinated by the “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy and Prof. Tovar as the project manager. The results of this field, which is primarily based on interdisciplinary collaborations with medical specialties as neurology and psychiatry, were presented at national and international congresses and published in collaboration with PhD students at the university that I attend.

The **fourth section** comprises the interdisciplinary research directions divided in two large categories: in connection with fields of dentistry or in connection with medical specialities. All the scientific achievements were possible thanks to the collaboration with valuable researchers from various fields - dentistry, medical specialities, biologists, etc. The collaborators are co-authors of the scientific articles that are the basis of this habilitation thesis and are mentioned inside the thesis and in its bibliography. The collaboration was extensive and was possible because I was included in research teams from the university I belong to, but also from universities in the country and abroad. The research findings would not exist without the collaborators mentioned in the thesis.

In addition, it should be noted that some of the published articles were nationally awarded by UEFISCDI.

### **Academic Activity**

The second chapter entitled “Academic Activity” comprises the academic field from 2005 when I began the teaching activity in the Oral Pathology Discipline of the Faculty of Dentistry, “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy until present as lecturer and chief of the same Discipline. In addition to the teaching activity, I have contributed to the

development and improvement of teaching materials as well as to the evaluation of students and residents who have Oral Pathology included in their curricula. An activity that reflects the concern over time to guide students or young researchers is represented by the collaborations with the PhD students at the Carol Davila University as well as the mentorship of students' undergraduate theses. Starting with the academic year 2015-2016 until the academic year 2022-2023 I guided or coordinated 27 undergraduate theses. The outcomes of some of these were published in articles in which the students were authors, while the results of others were presented at various national or international scientific manifestations.

### **Professional Activity**

The third chapter entitled "Professional Activity" presents the progression of professional development. In 2018, I was honored with the title of Diplomate of Oral Medicine by the European Association of Oral Medicine, recognizing my expertise and contributions to the field at a European level. The title was added to the previous studies completed in the Faculty of Dentistry in 2004, in the Faculty of General Medicine in 2008, to the doctoral studies in 2014 and to the master's studies in 2015.

As elements of recognition of professional activity, the candidate's HIRSCH index has the value of 9 (Web of Science), 11 (Scopus) and 14 (Google academic). Thus, the increased visibility of the "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy was also favoured. A significant part of the scientific activity in which I have been actively involved is represented by reviews of 70 manuscripts in the field of medicine / oral pathology sent for publication in ISI journals at the request of their editors. The recognition of this activity is public and associated with the individual ORCID number (Open Researcher and Contributor ID): <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7658-9331>.

### **Career Development Plan: specific goals and strategies, timeline and milestones**

The fourth chapter outlines the career development plan in both academic and scientific fields. It includes specific strategies for enhancing the visibility, accessibility, and development of oral pathology and oral medicine in Romania, with the aim of improving patients' oral health.

Moving forward, my primary goal is to integrate emerging research findings into the curriculum of oral pathology and oral medicine at 'Carol Davila' University. I plan to introduce new modules on interdisciplinary approaches and cutting-edge diagnostic techniques, aligning our program with European standards. Additionally, I intend to establish

a collaborative research network focused on oral diseases, aiming to secure national and international grants to further elevate the field in Romania. My strategy includes fostering partnerships with leading universities and research institutions across Europe to increase our department's visibility and impact.

In the next few years, my focus will be on expanding our research output, with the goal of increasing publications in high-impact journals by 20% annually. I also plan to mentor new PhD students, guiding them through interdisciplinary research projects. By 2026, I aim to lead a successful application for a European research grant in oral pathology, which will support the development of new diagnostic tools and treatment protocols.