

**„CAROL DAVILA”
UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY, BUCHAREST
DOCTORAL SCHOOL
MEDICINE DOMAIN**



Abstract of the Habilitation thesis

**Mental health disorders in children and adolescents – from research to
clinical practice**

Candidate

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The habilitation thesis entitled "**Mental health disorders in children and adolescents - from research to clinical practice**" includes the relevant results in the academic, scientific and research fields of the candidate Florina Rad, completed after obtaining the title of doctor of medicine in 2015. The habilitation thesis was developed in accordance with the recommendations of the National Council for the Certification of University Titles, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU) and the C.S.U.D. Regulation of the "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest regarding the obtaining of the habilitation certificate. In the four chapters that make up the habilitation thesis, I presented the main achievements of my scientific, academic, and professional activity, as well as the academic career development plans. The main research projects and achievements in the mentioned fields are presented, scientific papers that demonstrate my interests in the main research and clinical fields specific to child and adolescent psychiatry.

Scientific activity / Scientific achievements

After obtaining the title of doctor of medicine in 2015, I published a number of 25 ISI articles, respectively 18 articles as the main author and 7 articles as a co-author. At the time of writing the thesis, the Hirsch Index is 8, and the cumulative impact factor of the articles published as the first author is 33.86 (impact factor at the date of publication). I have also published as a main author or co-author a number of 53 articles in BDI journals, 35 studies published in abstract in ISI rated journals, and 113 studies published in abstract in journals/volumes of scientific events with ISBN/ISSN. In 2019, I coordinated a book published by the Medical Publishing House entitled "Incursion in the world of the child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder - Guide for parents" (ISBN 973-39-0861-6). I also published as a main author a number of 5 chapters in treatises published in national publishing houses and 19 chapters as co-author.

Since 2020, I have been a representative of the national network in the COST Action CA19104: "Advancing Social Inclusion through Technology and EmPowerment" (MC Member). I also participate as a team member in projects such as ERA Net Neuron and EEAN Grant Romania-Norway, and I coordinated a pilot research program for the study of autism entitled "INCLLEN-Epidemiologic Research on Autism in Romania-Pilot Study" (in partnership with the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth)).

I was also a training expert in mental health projects for children and adolescents coordinated by the National Center for Mental Health and Fighting Against Drugs and in national programs in the field of mental health coordinated by the Ministry of Health. I coordinated the pre-pilot study phase of a WHO program in partnership with Autism Speaks, a program entitled "WHO Caregiver skills training program for families of children with developmental disorders or delay".

The main research directions on which I have focused together with the team from the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Discipline were Autism Spectrum Disorders, Psychotic Disorders, and Child and Adolescent Emotional Disorders - in terms of etiology, clinical manifestations, therapeutic approach, impact on the quality of life of the child and the family. In the habilitation thesis, I presented the main publications that reflect the scientific activity in the mentioned fields.

I am the president of the Romanian Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions since 2016, an association affiliated to international organizations and a member of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP), The International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (IACAPAP), and the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR).

A significant editorial activity for me is the one carried out for the "Romanian Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry", initially as a member of the editorial team, and later as editor-in-chief. The journal is currently indexed by EBSCO and Index Copernicus. Starting from 2023, I am a guest editor for "Children" journal, completing until now the special issue "Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health Progress". An extremely important editorial activity that honors me is to act as editor of the IACAPAP e-textbook of Child and Adolescent Mental Health for the term 2023-2026.

Academic activity / Academic achievements

I started teaching in 2008 as an assistant lecturer in the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Discipline. In 2015, I completed my doctoral thesis in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorder, and in 2016 I occupied the lecturer position through a competition. Later in 2021, I filled the position of associate professor through a competition, and I also became head of discipline.

Throughout my teaching career, I have been involved in the guidance and coordination of students and resident doctors in the Pediatric Psychiatry specialty. I guided and coordinated undergraduate theses, some of which culminated with the publication of the results in specialized journals or their presentation in the form of posters or presentations at national or international conferences. I participated in exams and contests within "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, as well as in specialty exams or contests.

A significant objective of my academic activity as a residency coordinator consists in harmonizing and aligning the training curriculum in pediatric psychiatry with the European one. As part of this effort, starting in 2024, I have been nominated as a representative of UEMS-CAP ("The Child and Adolescent section of the Union European Medical Specialists") as the president of the Romanian Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Associated Professions (ARPCAPA/ RACAPAP).

Professional activity / Professional achievements

I worked as an assistant lecturer in the Pediatric Psychiatry Clinic of the "Prof. Dr. Alex. Obregia" Bucharest, a position filled by competition in 2008, and after obtaining in 2009 the title of specialist doctor in pediatric psychiatry in 2010, I also obtained clinical integration. Since then I carry out my professional activity within the Pediatric Psychiatry Clinical Department at the "Prof. Dr. Alexandru Obregia" Clinical Psychiatry Hospital in Bucharest as primary physician (since 2014) and head of department (since 2018).

The Pediatric Psychiatry Clinic of the "Prof. Dr. Alexandru Obregia" Clinical Psychiatry Hospital offers pediatric psychiatry services for children and adolescents in Bucharest, Ilfov and the neighboring counties of South-East Romania, but also at the national level. As a doctor, I evaluated children and adolescents with various mental health disorders in both inpatient and outpatient types of hospitalization. In my clinical practice I tried to integrate information and best practices found in international guidelines, having as a main goal a constant increase of the quality of the services offered. In the process of standardizing and aligning the approach to various psychiatric pathologies with the good practices promoted by the international guidelines, within the clinic we developed evaluation and treatment protocols for the main psychiatric pathologies.

A first step of my activity as head of department was to advocate for the establishment of a Pediatric Psychiatry Ward Room that has existed since 2019. Another significant objective of mine as head physician is to increase the types of services and facilities that we offer to hospitalized patients. In this sense, in collaboration with ASSMB (Administration of Hospitals and Medical Services in Bucharest) and UNICEF in Romania, we have developed a series of important projects such as: setting up the first sensory park within the premises of the "Prof. Dr. Alexandru Obregia" Hospital, the purchase of psychological test batteries necessary for the evaluation of mental health disorders, the purchase of a virtual reality therapy system, but also the diversification of therapeutic activities for hospitalized patients and professional training courses for the medical staff.

Academic career evolution and development plan

The purpose of my teaching activity is to improve the educational experience for medical students, residents in Pediatric Psychiatry and other related specializations. I aim to constantly develop and adapt the teaching materials for students and residents, keeping them up to current university standards, by addressing current areas of interest in child and adolescent mental health. Furthermore, I aim to identify innovative teaching methods to enhance the learning experience of students and residents, such as the development of training sessions based on simulation and role-play techniques, in order to practice the management of complex psychiatric emergencies in children and adolescents.

I consider it necessary and have set the objective of developing mentoring programs for medical students, residents and members of the department to share knowledge and guide them in their careers, in order to shape the next generations of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists.

I believe it is of paramount importance to collaborate with other disciplines such as psychiatry, pediatrics, pediatric neurology, family medicine and school medicine so as to create interdisciplinary courses/workshops that cover interconnected topics in the field of Pediatric Psychiatry and other medical specialties.

A faculty member requires continuous training both in his field of expertise as well as in the field of pedagogy. Thus, I have established the objective of developing a series of training activities for the entire collective of the discipline as well as the clinical staff.

Regarding research, I consider it to be an essential component of a teacher's activity, contributing to the development and innovation of our field. For the next stage of my career, I plan to apply for national and international research grants to support studies that aim to address early identification of pediatric mental health disorders, and join national and international research consortia. Additionally, I would develop cross-disciplinary collaboration opportunities for applications to research grants and the initiation of research projects in collaboration with significant academic institutions in the field of mental health.

With the aim of improving clinical practice and community involvement to promote outcomes in the field of mental health for children and adolescents, I plan to elaborate and disseminate updated clinical guidelines for the treatment of common mental health disorders in children and adolescents, with the aim of standardizing the medical activity and disseminating the information at the community level, in addition to sustaining programs and policies that support funding and resources for pediatric mental health at the national level.

By focusing on the domains mentioned above and by establishing specific, achievable objectives, I plan to strengthen my personal academic profile, along with contributing to the development of the entire academic community, according to institutional standards and expectations. I aim to contribute significantly to the field of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry through teaching, research, clinical practice and leadership activities. I have set the objective of developing a student-centered academic career, encouraging their interest for knowledge, co-opting young students and doctors to get involved in research with the aim of providing optimal care for patients and increasing the visibility of the Child and Adolescent discipline at national and international level.