



OPINION

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Member of the Academic Jury appointed by Order No. RD – 260 of August 30, 2024, in Burgas, by the Rector of Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Prof. Dr. Hristo Bozov, Ph.D., and report reg. No. 2428/July 12, 2024

Regarding: Conducting a competition for the appointment of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education **7. Healthcare and Sports**, professional direction 7.1. **Medicine**, scientific specialty "General Medicine," Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas (competition announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 55/June 28, 2024).

Candidate in the Competition: Senior Assistant professor Dr. Nevena Georgieva Ivanova, Ph.D.

At the initial meeting of the Academic Jury, I was designated to provide an opinion. This opinion is based on an analysis of the documentation submitted by the candidate, fully aligned with the requirements and criteria set by the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Regulations, and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for Obtaining Academic Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas. The documentation provided by Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Nevena Georgieva Ivanova, Ph.D., for the competition procedure is comprehensive, precise, well-organized, and includes all necessary official certifications, references, and supporting materials.

Career Profile of the Candidate:

Dr. Nevena Georgieva Ivanova was born on September 12, 1974, in Plovdiv. She graduated from the Medical University of Plovdiv in 1998. She worked as a resident physician in the cardiology department of the First City Hospital in Plovdiv from 1998 to 2000. Since May 2000, she has held positions as an assistant in the Department of General Medicine and subsequently as a senior assistant in the Department of Urology and General Medicine at the Medical University of Plovdiv. From 2011 to the present, she has worked as a cardiologist at the "Karidad" Medical Center and the "St. Karidad" Hospital in Plovdiv. Since 2024, and up to the current competition procedure, she has been employed as a General Practitioner at "Dr. Ivan Nastev 2015 – Ambulatory Clinic for Primary Healthcare" Ltd. in Plovdiv.

In the professional development system (CPD), she holds recognized specialties in Internal Medicine (2004), Cardiology (2006), and General Medicine (2018). She obtained her Ph.D. in General Medicine in 2015 after successfully defending her dissertation on “Professional-Behavioral and Motivational Profile of General Practitioners.”

Dr. Nevena Ivanova is a co-author of eight textbooks and four monographs, the author of two individual monographs, and one book based on her defended dissertation for the Ph.D. degree. She has authored and co-authored 12 university study aids, eight of which she authored individually.

She has authored and co-authored 73 publications and reports in scientific periodicals: 33 in journals indexed in internationally recognized scientific information databases (Scopus, Web of Science), with 23 full-text articles, of which 10 have an Impact Factor (total IF 14.919), and 13 in Scopus; 10 of these articles are individual publications, of which five have an Impact Factor and five are indexed in Scopus; 10 reports in journals with an Impact Factor (total IF 11.511), being the first author in three of these. The total Impact Factor of her articles and reports is 26.43, and her H-index is 3. She has 40 publications in refereed journals with scientific peer review or in edited collective volumes; 52 publications in scientific proceedings from national and international congresses, conferences, and other scientific forums. She has presented scientific reports at more than 40 national and international congresses and conferences in countries such as India, Italy, France, Slovenia, Turkey, Ireland, Macedonia, Belgium, Israel, Portugal, Greece, the Netherlands, Denmark, and others. She has been awarded prestigious honors and awards at both the national and international levels.

She is proficient in English (level C1, Cambridge Certificate in English – FCE, CAE) and Russian (level B2), both of which she uses effectively in her professional work.

Summary: The information presented confirms that Nevena Ivanova possesses high qualifications, extensive experience, and skills indicative of purposeful and systematic professional development.

Requirements Related to the Candidate’s Research Activities:

Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Nevena Ivanova has submitted all required documents related to the standards outlined in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), as well as its application regulations — including national minimum standards and additional criteria specified by the Regulations on Conditions and Procedures for Obtaining Academic Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas. Her scientific works are organized according to the specified format, demonstrating compliance with both minimum and supplementary requirements. **The report confirms that, from a scientometric perspective, her submitted works exceed the minimum requirements of ZRASRB and the additional requirements of the University's regulations by a significant margin (ninefold).**

Points by Indicator Groups:

Indicator Groups	Content	Associate Professor Points Required	Points Dr. Nevena Ivanova
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	-	
C	Indicator 3 or 4	100	100
D	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	200	1828,2
E	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	60	1500
F	Sum of the indicators from 13 to the end	20	574,86
TOTAL POINTS		440	4053,06 т.

1. **Quantitative Description of Publications:** The candidate in the competition provides a list of scientific publications submitted in the current procedure, as follows: **100 scientific works**, which are separate from the publications in the dissertation for the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor", divided as follows:
 - Habilitation Work – Monograph "Arterial Hypertension – A Current View. Part 1" – 2020 (Indicator Group B, Item 3) – 1
 - Published Monograph, which is not presented as the main habilitation work, "Arterial Hypertension – A Current View. Part 2" – 2020 (Indicator Group G, Item 5) – 3
 - Published book based on the defended dissertation for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" "Professional-Behavioral and Motivational Profile of General Practitioners" – 2020 (Indicator Group G, Item 6) – 1
 - Publications and Reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases (Indicator Group G, Item 7) - 33, of which:
 - Full-text: 23, including 10 with an Impact Factor (total IF 14.919); 13 in Scopus, with 10 solo-authored (5 with Impact Factor and 5 in Scopus);
 - Reports: 10 (in journals with an Impact Factor, total IF 11.511); first author of 3; total Impact Factor for articles and reports 26.43; H-index 3
 - Publications and Reports published in peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes (Indicator Group G, Item 8) - 40, of which 10 solo-authored, first author of 6.
 - Published Chapter in a Collective Monograph (Indicator Group G, Item 9) – 2
 - Published University Textbook (Indicator Group E, Item 20) – 8

- Published University Teaching Aid (Indicator Group E, Item 21) - 12, of which 8 are independently developed.

Citations of the Candidate's Scientific Works: Dr. Nevena Ivanova provides a citation list with **88 in Bulgarian sources and 53 in international sources**, distributed as follows: referenced and indexed in globally recognized databases or in monographs and collective volumes - 53 in international and 15 in Bulgarian publications, indexed in world databases; monographs and collective volumes with peer review - 23; non-indexed peer-reviewed journals - 50, evidencing the recognition of the candidate's work in the scientific community.

2. Fields of Scientific Research and Contributions of Scientific Works:

Dr. Nevena Ivanova's research activity aligns with the field of the competition. In the Report on the Contributions of her Scientific Works, these are presented in ten thematic directions:

1. General Medicine; 2. Cardiology; 3. Internal Medicine; 4. Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases; 5. Oncology; 6. Vascular Medicine; 7. Palliative Care; 8. Public Health; 9. Medical Education; 10. Genetics.

Dr. Ivanova systematically presents the key scientific and applied contributions from her work in the above-listed directions. Her publications and materials cover a wide range of topics related to general practice, with a focus on reforms, quality, organization, and management of primary care, medical education (training of medical students and general medicine residents), cardiovascular diseases and complications, current issues related to COVID-19, and the role of the general practitioner. Their contributions involve a combination of original research, clinical case descriptions, development of educational materials (university textbooks and handbooks) and articles on primary care policy and management. Here I highlight some of them in sequence:

1. Scientific Research on Primary Health Care Reform and Access to Primary Health Services in Bulgaria

These studies are critically important for improving the health system, providing a foundation for informed decision-making, resource optimization, and sustainable improvement of healthcare quality. They ensure equitable access to healthcare for all citizens.

2. Scientific Research on Cardiovascular Diseases, Risk Factors, and Management in Primary Care

This research plays a key role in improving public health and the efficiency of the healthcare system by providing essential information for early diagnosis, prevention, and effective treatment of cardiovascular diseases. This leads to better health outcomes and a reduction in morbidity and mortality rates from these conditions.

3. Scientific Research on COVID-19 Complications and Their Management in Primary Care

These studies are essential for enhancing public health and healthcare efficiency, offering valuable guidance on early diagnosis, prevention, and effective treatment of

COVID-19-related complications. This results in better health outcomes and reduced morbidity and mortality rates. The research supports healthcare professionals, including general practitioners, in delivering quality care and managing patients during the pandemic at the primary care level.

4. **Research on Professional Stress and Burnout Among General Practitioners**
Research on this topic is crucial for improving working conditions and mental health among healthcare professionals. It provides valuable insights and guidance for early diagnosis, prevention, and effective management of stress and burnout, leading to improved healthcare service quality and patient outcomes. The studies support policy and program development to aid healthcare professionals and strengthen the health system overall.
5. **Research on Screening and Prevention in Primary Care**
These studies play a vital role in public health and the healthcare system's efficiency by providing valuable information and guidelines for early diagnosis, prevention, and effective management of diseases. This leads to better health outcomes and reduced morbidity and mortality. The research supports healthcare professionals in delivering quality care and managing patients while optimizing health resources in general practice.
6. **Research on Care Quality and Evidence-Based Practice in Primary Care**
This research is crucial for improving health services and population health by offering information and guidance on implementing evidence in clinical practice, enhancing care quality, and increasing healthcare service efficiency. The studies support healthcare professionals and administrators in developing and implementing strategies to optimize healthcare services, leading to better patient outcomes and satisfaction.
7. **Research on Specific Patient Groups, such as the Elderly and Adolescents in Primary Care**
This research is essential for improving healthcare services for vulnerable groups. It provides important information and guidance for adapting medical care to the specific needs and challenges faced by these patients, supporting the development of personalized therapeutic and preventive approaches, improving health outcomes, and enhancing the quality of life for elderly people and adolescents.
8. **Clinical Cases of Rare or Complex Medical Conditions**
These cases are essential for advancing medical science and practice, offering a unique opportunity for an in-depth study and understanding of complex medical aspects, which leads to better diagnosis, treatment, and management of rare and complex conditions. These cases enrich medical literature, improve clinical practice, and facilitate the development of new therapeutic approaches, ultimately leading to better patient outcomes.
9. **Development of Educational Materials and Assessment Tools**
These resources are crucial for training and professional development for medical

students and general practitioners. Nevena Ivanova contributed to two chapters in the first general medicine textbook, *Introduction to General Medicine and General Medical Practice*. The published materials provide structured and systematic knowledge that facilitates understanding of complex medical concepts and skills for Bulgarian and international students and residents in the context of general medical practice.

10. **Numerous Publications in the Field of General Medicine**

These publications have provided data on the current state of organization, management, operations, quality, resources, and challenges in primary health care, which could serve as a basis for future policy implementation in this part of the healthcare system.

11. **Additional Significant Contribution in Genetics**

Ivanova is the author of a publication on a **unique case** of FGF23 gene mutation (p.Thr68Ala), associated with severe vascular aneurysms and tumor calcinosis.

Recognized as a scientific discovery, this work was acknowledged by a global honorary scientific society and Harvard Medical School. It is intended to influence the revision and update of the educational and examination materials at one of the world's most prestigious universities, potentially advancing the search for new molecular-level treatment methods and strategies for this extremely rare genetic disease.

3. **Scientific Research Projects:** Dr. Nevena Ivanova has participated in two projects at the Medical University – Plovdiv: “COVID-19 HUB – Information, Innovation, and Implementation of Integrative Scientific Developments” and “OMNIA”.

In summary: Based on all presented, there is substantial reason for a **high evaluation of the candidate's scientific research activity**.

Evaluation of Teaching and Educational Activity: Dr. Ivanova has long-standing experience as an instructor in the higher medical education system, conducting annual teaching loads ranging from **419** to **514** hours reflected in the presented **References** for academic workload, issued by the "Educational Activities" Department of the Medical University - Plovdiv. She delivers lecture courses, practical exercises, and clinical internships in General Medicine for medical students. She also contributes to postgraduate training for General Medicine residents. Participates in the post-graduate training of General Medicine specialists - module Fundamentals of General Medicine. As already emphasized above, Dr. Ivanova is the author and co-author of a number of textbooks and teaching aids, develops educational and doctoral programs, lecture courses, tests, etc.

In summary: All this gives me grounds for a **high assessment of the candidate's educational and teaching activities**.

Membership in Scientific and Professional Organizations: Dr. Ivanova is a member of esteemed national and international professional and scientific organizations, including EURACT, WATCH, European General Practice Research Network (EGPRN), Bulgarian Society of Cardiology, National Association of General Practitioners in Bulgaria, Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, Bulgarian Medical Association, and The Scientific Research Honor Society Sigma Xi.

Awards and Honors Nevena Ivanova has received numerous prestigious national and international awards and recognitions: a Certificate of Achievement with a high score from Harvard Medical School - Genetics (2024); Recognition from Harvard Medical School for the significance of a scientific discovery (2024); Recognition from one of the oldest and most prestigious global scientific societies, Sigma Xi, for scientific achievements and contributions to advancing knowledge (2024); Recognition from journals indexed in global databases for high ratings as an author and for contributions to science (2024). Certificate for Best Scientific Research and Presentation at the Fourth World Congress on Tobacco or Health, Delhi, India, 2005; Certificate from the Ministry of Health for "Contribution to Health Policy and the Modernization of the Healthcare System in Bulgaria" for the "White Paper on Value-Based Healthcare," 2014; Certificates and a plaque from National Congresses and Conferences on General Medicine in 2014 and 2016.

CONCLUSION:

Overall Evaluation: Based on all the information above, **I provide a wholly positive assessment of Senior Assistant Prof. Dr. Nevena Georgieva Ivanova, MD, for the academic position of "Associate Professor."** Dr. Ivanova, with her extensive pedagogical experience, high qualifications, significant scientific production, and rich clinical practice, **meets and exceeds the qualitative and quantitative requirements for the academic development outlined by the Regulations at Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas.**

I confidently give my affirmative vote "YES" to her candidature.

Recommendation: I strongly recommend the respected scientific jury to vote **positively for Dr. Nevena Georgieva Ivanova, MD,** " in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional direction 7.1. **Medicine,** scientific specialty "**General Medicine,**" for the academic position of "**Associate Professor**" in "**General Medicine**" at Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University – Burgas (competition announced in the State Gazette - No. 55/28.06.2024).

04.11. 2024
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