

To
The Chair of the Academic Committee,
Appointed by Order
No. RD–205/23.06.2025
of the Rector of Burgas State University
"Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov"

Бургаски държавен университет
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Per. No. 3205 / 28.08.2025r.

REVIEW

By Prof. Dr Hristo Stoyanov Bozov MD

Subject: Competition (announced in the State Gazette, issue 34 of 22.04.2025) for the academic position of "**Professor**" in the field of higher education 7. "Healthcare and Sports", professional direction 7.1. "Medicine", scientific specialty "Oncology", for the needs of the Faculty of Medicine at Burgas State University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov"

Procedure Information

Pursuant to the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for Acquiring Academic Degrees and Occupying Academic Positions at Burgas State University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov", and by Order No. RD–205/23.06.2025 of the Rector of BSU "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov", I was appointed as a member of the academic committee. At the first non-attendance meeting, I was assigned to prepare a review.

The only admitted candidate is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kiril Georgiev Kirov, MD, PhD. The documents submitted by him comply with the current legal framework of the country and the internal rules of the university.

Biographical Data and Professional Qualifications

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kiril Georgiev Kirov, MD, PhD, was born on 22.01.1966 in

the village of Dobroplodno, Varna Region. He graduated with a degree in Medicine from the Medical University – Varna in 1993, and in 1998 he acquired a specialty in Surgery.

His professional career includes the Department of General and Operative Surgery at University Hospital "St. Marina" – Varna (until 2008), the Department of Oncological Surgery at SBALOZ "Dr. M. Markov" – Varna, and the Department of Oncological Surgery at the Cancer Center – Shumen. Since December 2024, he has been working in the Surgical Department of the Cancer Center – Burgas, and as of May 2025, he has been appointed Head of the newly established Clinic of Oncological Surgery at the same center. He is fluent in English and Russian. His postgraduate qualification includes participation in numerous specialized trainings and courses, held both in Bulgaria and abroad, including:

- Hepatobiliary and Transplant Surgery (Israel)
- Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation (USA)
- Diagnostic and Operative Laparoscopy (Medical University – Pleven)
- Stapled Surgery Techniques (USA)
- Abdominal Ultrasound (Medical University – Varna)
- Conventional Gastrointestinal Endoscopy with Biopsy (Medical University – Pleven)
- Open and Laparoscopic Hernia Surgery (Greece)

In 2015, he defended a dissertation on the topic: "Optimization of Outcomes in Conventional and Laparoscopic Colorectal Resections", earning the educational and scientific degree "Doctor."

In 2017, he was habilitated as an Associate Professor. He is the author or co-author of over 50 scientific publications in fields such as surgery, oncology, gastroenterology, and coloproctology, published in reputable Bulgarian and international journals. He is the author of two monographs:

- *"Colorectal Precancers"* (2017)
- *"Insufficiency of Colorectal Anastomosis: Prevention, Consequences, and Treatment"* (2021) – submitted as the habilitation work in this competition.

He is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Association, the Bulgarian Surgical Society, and the International Medical Association "Bulgaria".

Research Activity

In the current competition, the candidate has submitted the following scholarly works:

- Habilitation work (monograph) – 1
- Publications in peer-reviewed journals (Scopus, WoS) – 12 (9 in international journals, 3 in Bulgarian journals)
- Publications in reviewed but non-indexed journals – 14 (5 international, 9 Bulgarian)

Total publications: 27, with Assoc. Prof. Kirov as first or sole author in 16 of them.

Cumulative Impact Factor (post-habilitation): 5.9

Cumulative SJR (post-habilitation): 1.82

Citations:

- In indexed databases – 12
- In other reviewed sources – 27

Table of Points by Indicator Groups for the Academic Position "Professor":

Group	Indicators	Requirement	Assoc. Prof. Kirov
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	–	–
C	Indicator 3 or 4	100	100
D	Indicators 5–9	250	692.5
E	Indicators 10–12	150	315
F	Indicators 13 and above	120	255
Total		670	1412.5

Main Research Areas:

The research activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kiril Kirov, MD, PhD, is closely related to his long-standing clinical practice as an abdominal surgeon, oncologist, and coloproctologist. His main scientific interests include:

1. Colorectal surgery
2. Pancreatic surgery
3. Multiorgan resections
4. Oncological case studies
5. Rare clinical cases

6. Laparoscopic hernia surgery
7. Medical scientometrics

1) Colorectal Surgery:

- Study of pneumodissection for precise dissection around the colon
- Identification of risk factors for anastomotic leakage
- Optimization of techniques using seromuscular suture and protective stoma

2) Pancreatic Cancer Surgery:

- Application of a modified pancreaticogastrostomy technique with combined drainage, reducing the risk of fistula

3) Multiorgan Resections:

Analysis of 175 interventions for locally advanced colorectal cancer, including combined resections involving gynecological and urological organs. Multiorgan resection, when applied to carefully selected patients, is affirmed as a feasible and relatively safe procedure, providing survival outcomes comparable to standard resections. Despite the increased risk of intraoperative blood loss, adequate preoperative preparation significantly extends the limits of surgical radicality.

4) Rare Non-Oncological Clinical Cases:

Reports of rare clinical observations, including two original cases illustrating the diagnostic and therapeutic challenges of abdominal actinomycosis. Two cases of genital actinomycosis are presented, in which extensive surgical intervention was performed: total abdominal hysterectomy, bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy, sigmoidectomy, incidental appendectomy, omentectomy, and resection of peritoneal tissue. Histologically, an infiltrative process was confirmed.

Another rare case involves isolated congenital absence of the **ductus cysticus**—an extremely unusual biliary tract anomaly. In clinical practice, its identification during laparoscopy typically necessitates conversion to open surgery. In the presented case, however, the effectiveness of a laparoscopic approach was demonstrated, wherein resection of the gallbladder was performed, leaving a small segment attached to the common bile duct to prevent stenosis. The procedure involved meticulous

dissection of the extrahepatic bile ducts and achieved successful minimally invasive treatment.

5) Oncological Case Reports

Of particular interest are case reports describing rare malignant diseases with proven clinical and scientific relevance. The presented cases involve nosological entities that are rare both in Bulgarian and international practice.

- **Retroperitoneal liposarcoma:** A case of a 69-year-old patient with a giant tumor weighing 9.5 kg is reported. Tumor extirpation and right hemicolectomy were performed in June 2014, followed by two reoperations due to local recurrence. Chemotherapy and radiotherapy were administered, although their effectiveness remains debated in the literature. Surgical intervention is confirmed as the leading factor for long-term disease control.
- **Extragastrointestinal stromal tumor (EGIST):** A case of an 80-year-old patient with a large tumor (20×20×20 cm) located in the lesser omentum is described. Radical extirpation led to complete clinical recovery. This represents the first reported case of EGIST with this localization in Bulgaria.
- **Pancreatic neuroendocrine tumor (PNET):** A 52-year-old female patient with a giant tumor (16 cm) underwent modified central pancreatectomy with resection of the common hepatic artery, without reconstruction of the pancreatic duct.

6) Laparoscopic Hernia Surgery

Minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery for inguinal hernias has become an established approach, offering lower rates of postoperative pain and better quality of life compared to open techniques. One of the main risk factors for developing chronic postoperative inguinal pain (CPIP) is the method of mesh fixation. In this regard, the efficacy of self-fixating surgical mesh has been studied. Results show that the laparoscopic TAPP technique using **ProGrip** mesh is a reliable method with significant potential to reduce CPIP.

7) Medical Scientometrics

Using scientometric methods, the structure and dynamics of international scientific communication on interdisciplinary topics related to oncology and minimally invasive surgery were analyzed.

- **Publication activity on liver cancer:** A retrospective search was conducted in the Scopus database for two periods—2004–2007 (7,931 publications) and 2014–2017 (19,861 publications)—with authors from 126 countries. Bulgaria was represented by 9 publications in international journals. Leading authors, journals, and institutions were identified, with dominant contributions from China, the USA, and Japan.
- **Scientometric analysis of laparoscopic proctocolectomy:** A thematic search was performed in the Web of Science Core Collection, MEDLINE, and BIOSIS Citation Index for the period 2008–2017. Publication trends, language distribution, leading authors, institutions, and scientific forums were analyzed. Key “core” journals and conferences were identified. The featured article has been cited 8 times.

Summary of Scientific and Applied Contributions

The research activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kiril Kirov, MD, demonstrates active clinical involvement, analytical thinking, and the ability to work effectively in interdisciplinary teams of surgeons, oncologists, gastroenterologists, pathologists, and imaging specialists.

1. The challenges related to colorectal anastomotic insufficiency have been thoroughly investigated. A prevention, diagnostic, and treatment algorithm has been developed and successfully implemented in clinical practice.
2. Excellent postoperative outcomes have been achieved in patients with neoplastic and inflammatory diseases of the gastrointestinal tract.

3. The advantages of the laparoscopic technique using self-fixating mesh in the treatment of inguinal hernias, including in the prevention of CPIP, have been confirmed.
4. Case reports of extremely rare oncological diseases treated with innovative surgical techniques have been presented—contributing significantly to both clinical and scientific knowledge.
5. The scientometric analyses contribute to the international visibility of Bulgarian medical science and offer tools for strategic management of research output in smaller countries and institutions.

Diagnostic and Therapeutic Activity

Over the past three years, Assoc. Prof. Kirov has performed a total of 685 operations as lead surgeon, including 413 complex and highly complex procedures and 272 moderate and minor surgeries. As an assistant, he participated in 119 surgeries, including 78 complex and 41 moderate and minor interventions.

Since January 2022, he has introduced laparoscopic TAPP hernia repair using ProGrip mesh in the Department of Surgical Oncology at Shumen Cancer Center. More than 150 procedures have been performed with no cases of chronic postoperative pain (CPIP). The results have been published in a journal with an impact factor.

His main surgical focus is in colorectal surgery. In addition to routine procedures, multivisceral resections are performed for advanced malignancies, including in patients previously deemed inoperable in other national clinics.

Teaching and Academic Activities

- Medical University – Pleven, Faculty of Public Health: Course instructor for "Medico-social Aspects of Oncological Diseases," 4 semesters with 25 hours of lectures and 5 hours of practical sessions per semester (2021–2025).
- Medical University – Varna: 180 hours of instruction in "Surgical Diseases" (2015/2016).

- Supervision of 3 PhD students (1 graduated).
- Supervision of 1 surgical resident (specialization completed) at SBALOZ "M. Markov" – Varna, and 3 surgical interns at the Surgical Oncology Department of Shumen Cancer Center.

Scientific Research Projects

Participation in **3 research projects** with high theoretical and practical value:

1. Medical University – Pleven: "Center of Competence for Personalized Medicine, 3D and Telemedicine, Robotic and Minimally Invasive Surgery."
2. Shumen University "Ep. Konstantin Preslavski": "Protection and Reliability of Information in Multimedia Objects, 3D Terrain Modeling."
3. Shumen University: "Steganographic Protection of Information and Applications of Artificial Intelligence and 3D Modeling."

Conclusion

All facts from the professional biography, scientific production, and diagnostic-therapeutic activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kiril Georgiev Kirov, MD, fully comply with the legal requirements of the Republic of Bulgaria. His scientific work demonstrates original contributions, with no evidence of plagiarism. Dr. Kirov is recognized as an honest, dedicated, and highly qualified specialist, respected by colleagues, patients, and students.

Based on the above, I recommend that the esteemed Academic Committee award the academic position of *Professor* in the scientific field of *Oncology* to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kiril Georgiev Kirov, MD.

Review prepared by: