

To
The Chairman of the Scientific Jury,
Appointed by Order No P - 2006/13.07.2023
Of the Rector of Medical University of Plovdiv
15A Vasil Aprilov Blvd
4002 Plovdiv

Re: Protocol No 1/ 17.07.2023



Hereby I present: an OPINION

regarding a competition for an academic position „Associate Professor“
in scientific specialty „Pharmacology (incl. Pharmacokinetics and Chemotherapy)“
announced for the needs of the Department of Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology at
Medical University of Plovdiv
in State Gazette No 32 / 08.04.2023

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OPINION

By Assoc. Prof. Silvia Gancheva Marinova, MD, PhD

Head of the Department of Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics at the Faculty of Medicine at Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”, Varna

regarding

a competition for an academic position „**Associate Professor**” in **Pharmacology (incl. Pharmacokinetics and Chemotherapy)** in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sport, professional field 7.1. Medicine, announced in SG, issue 32/08.04.2023 for the needs of Department of Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology at Faculty of Medicine at Medical University of Plovdiv

Information about the competition

I present the current opinion on the basis of an Order № P-2006/13.07.2023 of the Rector of Medical University of Plovdiv and a decision of the Scientific Jury (meeting №1/17.07.2023).

A candidate in the competition is **Darinka Slavcheva Dimitrova, MD, PhD**. The submitted materials for the competition meet the requirements of the Law on Development of Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for Academic Development of Medical University of Plovdiv.

Career profile of the candidate

Darinka Dimitrova, MD, PhD obtained her medical master degree in 1994 at the Medical University of Plovdiv. In 1995, she was appointed to the position of “Assistant professor” in the Department of Pharmacology at Medical University of Plovdiv, in 2001 she held the position of “Senior Assistant Professor”, and from 2004 to the present she is a “Chief Assistant Professor” in the Department of Pharmacology and Clinical pharmacology. In the Department, she is responsible for Science and Research and leads the work of the Pharmacology study group.

In 2013, Dr. Dimitrova successfully defended her doctoral thesis and acquired an educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Pharmacology (incl. Pharmacokinetics and Chemotherapy) (50 points for group A indicators). Dr. Dimitrova has two scientific specialties – “Pharmacology“, acquired in 2001, and “Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics”, acquired in 2020 (80 points out of the required 40 points for indicator 15, group F). Over the years, she participated in a total of 11 additional qualification courses and specializations held both in Bulgaria and abroad - in Romania, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Latvia.

Dr. Dimitrova is a member of Bulgarian Association of Pharmacology, Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, European Association for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, European College of Neuropsychopharmacology and Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.

Dr. Dimitrova speaks English and Russian.

Evaluation of scientific activity

Over the years, Dr. Dimitrova's scientific research activity has been devoted mostly to neuropsychopharmacology, covering both the study of the effects on the central nervous system of newly synthesized molecules, as well as the study and comparison of the effects of already established drugs with the aim of expanding their pharmacological characteristics. Dr. Dimitrova's scientific researches in the field of experimental pharmacology have a high scientific contribution. In addition to the work with experimental animals, the candidate's scientific contributions are also related to the implementation of epidemiological and clinical studies.

Dr. Dimitrova participates in the competition with 1 habilitation thesis – a monograph (100 points for indicator 3, group C), 12 full-text publications published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in SCOPUS and/or Web of Science in a required minimum of 10 articles (207.7 points for indicator 7, group D) and 30 full-text publications published in non-refereed journals with scientific review (382.1 points for indicator 8, group D). Among the presented full-text publications, there are 5 articles with an impact factor, which covers the requirements for occupying the academic position “Associate Professor” according to the Regulations for Academic Development of Medical University of Plovdiv. Dr. Dimitrova is a first author of 24 and a second author of 8 of the presented for the competition publications.

For the competition, Dr. Dimitrova presents a list of 64 citations of her research articles in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in SCOPUS, as well as a list of 4 citations in doctoral theses – a total of 1000 points for indicators 10 and 11, group E, which significantly exceeds the 200 points needed to occupy the academic position “Associate Professor”. Attention should also be paid to the high *h*-index of Dr. Dimitrova – according to SCOPUS, it is equal to 5.

The monograph submitted for participation in the competition as a main habilitation thesis is entitled “Learning and memory”. It is focused on a very relevant topic and concerns socially significant problems such as neurodegenerative diseases. Although it is devoted to a specific and complicated topic and describes in detail the anatomical-physiological basis of learning and memory, the experimental methods for their evaluation, as well as models for induction of impaired memory, it is a fascinating and easy to perceive scientific work.

The scientific projects in which Dr. Dimitrova takes part are 10 in number, and she is the main researcher in 1 of them. Two of the projects are international, 4 are national and 4 are intra-university for Medical University of Plovdiv. The participation in scientific projects results in 160 points for indicators 16 and 17, group F.

The high activity of Dr. Dimitrova as a scientist and the impressive quality of her research are also visible from the submitted list of participations in scientific forums. She has participated in more than 65 conferences and congresses. Abstracts of 24 of the researches presented at international forums have been published in supplements of some of the world's most prestigious scientific journals in the field of pharmacology and neuropsychopharmacology. The total impact factor of the abstracts of Dr. Dimitrova is 89.963, which indicates that she is a proven and established specialist in our scientific field. It should also be emphasized that her researches in the field of

neuropsychopharmacology have been awarded 5 times, which confirms again the high quality of her scientific work.

Evaluation of teaching activity

The experience of Dr. Dimitrova as a university teacher is more than 28 years. She has held the academic position of “Chief Assistant” in the Department of Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology for more than 18 years, which significantly exceeds the requirements for occupying the academic position “Associate Professor” according to the Regulations for Academic Development of Medical University of Plovdiv (1850 points out of the required 200 points). The teaching activity of Dr. Dimitrova includes practical seminars in the disciplines “Pharmacology” for students majoring in “Medicine”, “Dental medicine”, “Pharmacy” and “Nursing”, “Clinical pharmacology” for medical students and “Pharmacotherapy” for pharmacy students. Dr. Dimitrova has also led some lectures in the relevant disciplines over the years. Her teaching activity from the last 2 academic years is 421 academic hours for 2020/2021 and 577 academic hours for 2021/2022, which exceeds significantly the requirements for occupying the academic position “Associate Professor” (499 points out of the required 150 points). Dr. Dimitrova is a co-author of 5 university textbooks on pharmacology and clinical pharmacology and 16 manuals – handbooks for practical seminars in pharmacology for students of various specialties, incl. students in the English language program. (26.3 and 25.3 points for indicators 20 and 21, group F, respectively).

Dr. Dimitrova's dedication to teaching is most evident in her work with students from the pharmacology club. Over the years, she has worked actively with 11 medical and pharmacy students, and together with them she has 7 full-text publications, one of which has an impact factor, and 16 participations in scientific forums, 9 of which are international. The involvement of students in experimental research is extremely important for increasing the commitment, motivation and interest of students in scientific work.

Dr. Dimitrova is engaged also in the specialization programs – she was a lecturer in a basic course in Nephrology (30 points for indicator 22, group F).

Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical comments.

General assessment of the candidate's compliance with the minimum national and specific intra-university requirements according to the Law on Development of Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for Academic Development of Medical University of Plovdiv

Table 1 presents the comparative indicators of Dr. Darinka Dimitrova to the mandatory requirements for occupying the academic position “Associate Professor” in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sport, professional field 7.1. Medicine in Medical University of Plovdiv. Dr. Dimitrova has 4410.4 points in scientometric indicators, which fulfills and exceeds several times the minimum requirements.

Table 1. Scientometric indicators

Group of indicators	Content	Points required for academic position "Associate Professor"	Points of Darinka Dimitrova, MD, PhD
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	-	-
C	Indicator 3 or 4	100	100
D	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	220	589.8
E	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	200	1000
F	Sum of indicators 13 to 22	80	321.6
G	Teaching activity	150	499
	Academic position	200	1850
	Total:	1000	4410.4

Conclusion

Darinka Slavcheva Dimitrova, MD, PhD, is an experienced and established scientist and academic teacher. The materials submitted by the candidate for the competition show that Darinka Dimitrova, MD, PhD, **meets** and in fact exceeds several times the mandatory and specific requirements and scientometric criteria specified in the Law on Development of Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for Academic Development of Medical University of Plovdiv for occupation of academic position "Associate Professor".

In view of the above, I confidently give my **positive assessment** to Darinka Dimitrova, MD, PhD in the competition and I offer the esteemed Members of the Scientific Jury to award Darinka Dimitrova, MD, PhD the academic position of "**Associate Professor**" in Pharmacology (incl. Pharmacokinetics and Chemotherapy) in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sport, professional field 7.1. Medicine

28.07.2023
Varna, Bulgaria

Prepared by: 
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