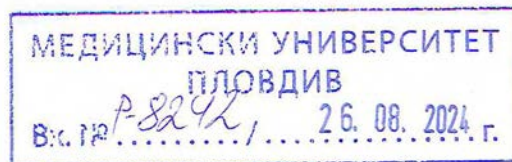


REVIEW



by **Victoria Sarafian, MD, PhD, DMSc,**

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Specialist in Clinical Immunology and Medical Biology,
at the Department of Medical Biology.

Regarding a competition for the academic position 'Professor' in the field of higher education 7. Health and Sport, Professional field 7.1. Medical Sciences, scientific specialty "Rheumatology", Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases, Faculty of Medicine, Medical University - Plovdiv, announced in the State Gazette, issue 35 of 19.04.2024.

The reviewing of the materials submitted for the competition is based on the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, as well as the Regulations for the Conditions and Procedure for Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at MU-Plovdiv.

The review is prepared on the basis of the Order No. P-2383/11.07. 2024 of the Vice Rector of MU-Plovdiv.

General presentation of the competition materials

Two candidates – Rositsa Karalilova, MD, PhD, DSc and Sevdalina Lambova, MD, PhD - both of them Associate Professors at Medical University - Plovdiv, Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases have applied for the competition.

The set of materials submitted by the candidates on electronic media are in accordance with the recommended minimum scientific-metric requirements for academic positions in the Regulations of MU-Plovdiv.

Assoc. Prof. Sevdalina Lambova

1. Career Development

Sevdalina Lambova graduated in 2003 from the Medical Faculty of Thrakia University - St. Zagora as Master of Medicine. From the next year she started specialization in internal medicine at the University Hospital "St. George", Plovdiv as a result of which in 2016 she got a specialty in internal medicine. From 2010 to 2014 she specialized in rheumatology and defended her specialty in 2015.

Dr. Lambova's professional path as a resident physician has passed through various healthcare institutions. It started at the University Hospital "St. First as a specialist and subsequently from 2007 to 2010 as a resident. In the next 3 years she was a physician at the University Hospital "Pulmed". Then from 2016 until now she has been working as a rheumatologist at the Medical Center-6 in Plovdiv. Since 2016 she has been in the team of St. Min Hospital where she is currently in charge of the rheumatology department.

Scientific development S. Lambova started in 2004 as a regular PhD student in rheumatology at the Medical University - Plovdiv but she defended her PhD degree at the Justus Liebig University in Germany in 2011, which was subsequently recognized by the Medical University - Plovdiv in 2013. The dissertation examines the role of capillaroscopy in rheumatology.

After successfully passing a competitive examination in 2007, she was appointed assistant professor at the Department of Internal Medicine of Medical University - Plovdiv. Since 2018 she has been a senior assistant and since 2022 an associate professor at the same department.

In 2014 she graduated with a Master of Health Management from the Faculty of Medicine of MU-Plovdiv.

S. Lambova continuously improves her qualification through trainings in joint ultrasonography, capillaroscopy and imaging in rheumatology. She is a

member of the EULAR Study Group on Microcirculation in Rheumatic Diseases.

Assoc. Prof. Lambova is a lecturer and presenter of several courses and workshops on capillaroscopy at home and abroad, including under the auspices of EULAR. Her active work in this field started in 2012 and she has proven herself as a specialist in capillaroscopic diagnostics in rheumatology.

In conclusion, Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova is a teacher and scientist who is actively building an academic career. She is a researcher with interdisciplinary and international contacts with a strong scientific output.

2. General description and evaluation of the applicant's activities

- Teaching and expert activity

Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova has over 17 years of teaching experience from the Medical University - Plovdiv as assistant professor, senior assistant professor and associate professor. Her work experience as a physician is over 14 years, of which 7 years as head of the rheumatology department. The average teaching load for the last 3 years is 469 hours of classroom and 327 hours of extra-curricular annual employment. She teaches two lecture courses on internal medicine to dental students in English and Bulgarian. She has taught practical classes in rheumatology in English to medical students and in internal medicine to dental students in English.

She is a member of examination committees for semester examinations of medical and dental students in Bulgarian and English and of scientific juries for the defense of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" and for the occupation of academic positions.

Assoc. Prof. Lambova is the co-supervisor of two PhD students - Dr. Nikolov, who is working on the influence of body composition on bone mineral density measured by whole-body DEXA, and Dr. Gelov, whose topic is not directly related to rheumatology. She is the independent research supervisor of

Dr. Dzhambazova, who studies rheumatic diseases with peripheral vascular syndrome.

Under her supervision, two postgraduate students in rheumatology are trained at the base of St. Mina Hospital in Plovdiv.

The candidate has significant teaching experience and has co-authored two sections of a textbook on internal medicine in Bulgarian and English.

- Scientific and applied activities

Assoc. Prof. Lambova has emerged as a researcher with a clearly defined scientific profile in the field of capillaroscopy and its applications in rheumatology practice. She enters the subject, starting with her dissertation and continuing with two monographs "Capillaroscopy in Rheumatology - Norm and Pathology" (2012) and "Capillaroscopy in Rheumatology - What else we need to know" (2024). These summarize many years of experience in capillaroscopic methodology and image analysis, based also on their own studies. Well-illustrated data from the most common pathology in rheumatology are presented. The two monographs are useful tools for postgraduate students and specialists not only in rheumatology but also in dermatology, vascular pathology, internal medicine, etc. In addition to these publications, S. Lambova is also the author of the chapter "Treatment of Raynaud's phenomenon" in the international monograph "Frontiers in Cardiovascular Drug Discovery", electronic edition of Bentham Books, 2020. In 2019, she co-authored the chapter "Systemic Sclerosis" in the collective monograph "Genomic and Precision Medicine," Elsevier.

The active publication activity of Assoc. Prof. Lambova has as a result 46 documents in Scopus and 840 independent citations with excluded self-citations and H-index 16. These indicators are serious scientific metrics that define her as a scientist with proven authority. In the current competition, she contributed 23 full-text refereed papers (11 with impact factor) and 6 full-text publications in non-refereed journals. She contributed 552 citations, including 533 citations in

refereed journals (Web of Science and Scopus) and 19 in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes.

The methodology that S. Lambova has mastered and uses allows her to expand her scientific searches in various diseases accompanied by vascular changes.

Her own studies have been conducted on capillaroscopic changes in undifferentiated connective tissue disease and an author's algorithm has been proposed to classify patients with Raynaud's phenomenon and update the criteria used for undifferentiated connective tissue disease.

Capillary diameters in patients with progressive systemic sclerosis and undifferentiated connective tissue disease with evidence of early microangiopathy were compared for the first time. The results demonstrate the need to measure all capillary diameters with emphasis on the apical portion and the venous arm.

Assoc. Prof. Lambova conducted a comparative study of capillaroscopic imaging with characteristics of the "scleroderma-like" type in progressive systemic sclerosis and the "scleroderma-like" type in other rheumatic diseases and found different pathogenetic mechanisms of microvascular damage in different nosologies.

The identification of a "scleroderma-like" type of microangiopathy at the onset of rheumatic diseases other than systemic sclerosis has important practical applications. Since some capillaroscopic changes are indistinguishable from those in scleroderma, a personalized approach is required, which is based on a proposed author's algorithm for classification of patients with Raynaud's phenomenon based on the capillaroscopic picture.

Again, in the context of the application of the same method, an association between capillaroscopic findings and immunological profile in patients with progressive systemic sclerosis was reported. An association

between the presence of anti-Scl-70 antibodies and the presence of "scleroderma" type microangiopathy was confirmed.

Along with the original contributions, confirmatory data are presented showing that a USB microscope with software at 200x magnification can be used as an alternative to video capillaroscopes in daily rheumatology practice, which is applicable in medical institutions with financial constraints.

Based on the own experience of Assoc. Prof. Lambova's experience in the use of capillaroscopy in rheumatology, scientific articles and authors' opinions have been published, which are important for clinical practice. The candidate has contributed to the creation of the National Consensus on Capillaroscopy in Rheumatology of the Bulgarian Society of Rheumatology.

As an internist and rheumatologist Assoc. Prof. Lambova also examines patients with osteoarthritis of the knee joints with different body mass index, with and without obesity, by assessing the level of various adipocytokines. The results enrich the current definition of the metabolic type of osteoarthritis of the knee joints. Along with clinical observations, the candidate participated with a team of BAS researchers in an experimental study of joint structural changes in a mouse model of collagenase-induced osteoarthritis evaluating the effect of combined administration of alendronate and metformin.

Assoc. Prof. Lambova has experience as a participant in a joint, successfully reported project with Paisii Hilendarski University, funded by the National Research Fund. She is also involved as an academic mentor in an educational project "Student Practices". The unquestionable international reputation of the candidate is evidenced by her participation in two COST actions - "Network on evidence-based physical activity in old age" and "PRoMoting GeRiAtric Medicine IN countries where it is still eMerGing".

The studies conducted have been reported to the scientific community at 11 scientific congresses and conferences, of which 3 international.

In conclusion, the research activity of Assoc. Prof. Lambova covers a significant part of the pathology in rheumatology based on her mastered method of capillaroscopy. The studies offer applied contributions to clinical practice, and a substantial part of the review articles and expert opinions she has published enrich scientific knowledge in this field.

3. Evaluation of the personal contribution and personal qualities of the candidate

I know Assoc. Prof. Lambova as a physician and researcher who ambitiously and purposefully follows his path of academic development, during which he realizes good international contacts and joint publications. It is not by chance that she was awarded the Rector's Prize for the best young scientist in 2025. She is active and consistent in her searches scientist and lecturer, and I hope that in the long term she will be able to build a team of young PhD students with whom to realize successful scientific work.

The analysis of the documents submitted for the competition and my personal impressions show that Assoc. Prof. Lambova repeatedly exceeds the scientific-metric criteria set in the Regulations of MU-Plovdiv, as is evident from the comparative data:

Indicators	Minimal requirements	Assoc. Prof. Lambova
A -1	50	50
Б - 2	-	-
В – 3 or 4	100	100
Г - 5 to 10	250	1325.2
Д - 11	300	8185
Е – from 12 till 22	140	223.1
Ж	400	945
Total	1240	10 828.3

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Sevdalina Lambova MD, PhD meet all the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria (ASDA), the Implementing Regulations of ASDA and the Regulations of MU-Plovdiv.

Her research activity significantly exceeds the minimum national requirements for the academic position of professor.

The candidate has submitted enough scientific papers published in reputable international journals. They contain original scientific and applied contributions which have been cited many times.

She is a clinician with two decades of experience, dedicated to scientific inquiry with impressive activity and initiative. After reading the materials and scientific works submitted in the competition, analysing their significance and scientific and applied contributions contained in them, I give my positive assessment and recommend the Scientific Jury to award to Assoc. Prof. Sevdalina Nikolova Lambova, MD, PhD, the academic position of "Professor" in Professional Field 7.1. Medical sciences, scientific specialty "Rheumatology", at the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases of Medical University of Plovdiv.

Заличено на основание
Чл.5 §1, б."В" Регламент (ЕС)2016/679

July 28th, 2024

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