



OPINION STATEMENT

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External member of Scientific Jury according to the Order of the Vice-Rector for scientific research activity of Medical University of Plovdiv №R-2383/11.07.2024;

About competition for occupying an academic position "Professor" in scientific specialty "Rheumatology" in the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases "Prof. Dr. Anton Mitov", Medical University of Plovdiv for teaching in Bulgarian and English language, announced in SG, issue 35/19.04.2024

This opinion statement has been prepared in accordance with the conditions and requirements set out in the Act for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and additional requirements determined in the Regulations for academic development in Medical University of Plovdiv.

General presentation of the candidate and the submitted documents for the competition

In the announced competition for the academic position "Professor" in the scientific specialty "Rheumatology" for the needs of the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases "Prof. Dr. Anton Mitov", Medical University – Plovdiv takes part Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Nikolova Lambova, who is a specialist in rheumatology with 8-year experience as Head of the Department in Rheumatology, MHAT "Sveti Mina", Plovdiv and over 2 ½ academic years experience as an "Associate professor" in Medical University of Plovdiv. Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova undergoes specialization at the Rheumatology Clinic, UMHAT "Sveti Georgi" - Plovdiv and has acquired two clinical specialties in rheumatology and internal medicine. In 2014, she obtained a master's degree in public health and health management. She has defended her dissertation in rheumatology in Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany in 2011, which was recognized by Medical University of Plovdiv in 2013. Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova has worked in the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases, Medical

University of Plovdiv for over 20 years. From 2004 to 2007 she has been a PhD student and her teaching activity as an Assistant Professor began in 2007. She has many years of experience in teaching English-speaking students and presents a Cambridge certificate (level C1) in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations for the academic development of Medical University of Plovdiv when participating in a competition for teaching in English language.

The documents submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Lambova for participation in the announced competition fulfill the requirements of the Act for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and additional requirements determined in the Regulations for the academic development of Medical University of Plovdiv. The publications and other evidence presented do not repeat those of previous procedures for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy" and procedures for occupying previous academic positions.

Candidate's scientific works and scientific contributions

For her entire academic development until now, Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Lambova has 77 full-text publications, of which 67 are indexed in Scopus/Web of Science. The total impact factor of the published full-text publications is 110.195. Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova actively participates with reports and scientific abstracts in national and international scientific conferences and congresses.

In the current competition for the academic position "Professor", Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Lambova takes part with a monograph, of which is a single author; 23 full-text publications in refereed journals (11 of them with impact factor); 6 full-text publications in non-refereed journals with scientific reviewing; 14 scientific abstracts in conferences and congresses in Bulgaria and abroad. The presented publications and abstracts in scientific forums in the competition are published after occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in 2022. Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova takes part also in two chapters of collective monographs in English and is a co-author of university textbook in English published by Medical University of Plovdiv.

The scientific research and publications of Assoc. Prof. Sevdalina Lambova are focused on the use of capillaroscopy in rheumatology, microangiopathy in rheumatic diseases, Raynaud's phenomenon and peripheral vascular syndromes, systemic sclerosis, undifferentiated connective tissue disease, osteoarthritis. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Lambova has original contributions in the field of capillaroscopy in the international scientific literature in the field

of rheumatology, which include the following results after occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor":

- study of the capillaroscopic changes in undifferentiated connective tissue disease with a suggested author's algorithm for the differential diagnosis of these cases and a proposal for up-dating the classification criteria of the disease;

- diagnosis of early microangiopathy in quantitative analysis of the capillary diameters;
- analysis of similarities and differences between "scleroderma" and "scleroderma-like" type microangiopathy in systemic sclerosis and other rheumatic diseases.

Regarding the topic of knee osteoarthritis, Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova has published original results about observed clinical and laboratory characteristics in metabolic type knee osteoarthritis. Histological analysis of articular tissues has shown a positive effect after administration of metformin and alendronate in a mice model of osteoarthritis.

I do accept the report presented by Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova about the original contributions of the published scientific works compared to the available results in the current scientific literature in the field of rheumatology in Bulgaria and at international level.

In Group D scientometric indicators (publications and reports, chapters of collective monographs), Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova has 1325.2 (250 points are required according to the requirements for occupying the position "Professor" in Medical University of Plovdiv determined in the Regulations for Academic Development).

Habilitation work - monograph

For participation in the competition, Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Lambova presents a habilitation monograph, entitled "Capillaroscopy in rheumatology - what else we have to know?" (2024), of which she is a single author. The monograph includes original results from author's research and is in compliance with the legal requirements for a habilitation work - monograph. The scientific work is a continuation of the first monograph authored by Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova about the use of capillaroscopy in rheumatology, entitled "Capillaroscopy in rheumatology - norm and pathology" (2021). Within 12 chapters, the microvascular capillaroscopic changes in the most common rheumatic diseases are discussed. The publication provides an opportunity for theoretical training in capillaroscopy for trainees and specialists, as well as for improvement of the practical diagnostic approach of the specialists, who use capillaroscopy.

Citations of the applicant's publications

According to the Scopus database (access August 2024), the publications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lambova have been cited 840 times. The H-index of Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Lambova is 14 (Scopus). In the current competition, the candidate participates with 552 citations (533 of which are in journals indexed in Web of Science and/or Scopus), for which a reference is presented by the National Center for Information and Documentation/NACID.

In Group E indicators (citations), the candidate participates with 8185 points (300 points are required for occupying the academic position "Professor" in Departments with clinical work in Medical University of Plovdiv).

Teaching activities, training of PhD students and trainees, project activity, textbook

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Lambova has been a clinical university lecturer in Medical University of Plovdiv, Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine since March 2007. From February 2022 until now, she occupies the position of "Associate Professor" in rheumatology. She holds two lecture courses in internal medicine for students in dental medicine in Bulgarian and English language, as well as practical classes in rheumatology and internal diseases for students in medicine and dental medicine in Bulgarian and English language. She is a supervisor of trainees in rheumatology. She is a leading expert in capillaroscopy and has considerable experience in postgraduate practical training in capillaroscopy. Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova is a scientific advisor of three PhD students: Dr. Martin Nikolov (defended dissertation 2023), Dr. Georgi Gelov (defended dissertation 2024), Dr. Sanie Dzhambazova (education is ongoing).

She has participated in national and international projects. The candidate works successfully in multidisciplinary teams with published original scientific works. On the basis of participation in a national project funded by the Bulgarian National Science Fund on knee osteoarthritis, a study was conducted that combines clinical and fundamental scientific research in a team with scientists from Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. This type of study is innovative and of significant importance in modern rheumatology. Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova is a co-author of a textbook in propaedeutics of internal diseases in English (Section Rheumatology In "Textbook of Propedeutics of Internal Diseases; Basic Principles of Physical Examination", Publisher – Medical University of Plovdiv - 2013, ISBN 978-619-7085 -01-3).

In Group F (training of PhD students and successfully defended PhD students, supervision of trainees, project activity, university textbook), Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova has 223.1 (required 140 points in this group).

In academic indicators from Group G (study load and occupying an academic position), Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova has 945 points (400 points required according to the requirements of the Regulations for Academic Development in Medical University of Plovdiv).

General assessment of the applicant's compliance with the mandatory conditions, quantitative criteria and scientometric indicators

The candidate Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova meets the mandatory conditions and fulfils the required scientometric indicators and indicators, reflecting academic results according to Article 29, Article 2b, paragraph 2, items 1 and 2, paragraph 5 in the Act for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and additional requirements determined in the Regulations for academic development in Medical University of Plovdiv for occupying the academic position "Professor".


Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova has occupied the academic position "Associate Professor" for 2 ½ academic years in Medical University of Plovdiv. She has published as a single author a habilitation monograph, which contains original scientific results. After occupying the academic position "Associate Professor", Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova has published 29 full-text publications, of which 23 are in refereed journals in Scopus/Web of science (11 have impact factor), 6 full-text publications in non-refereed journals with scientific reviewing and 14 scientific abstracts from conferences and congresses that have been published in refereed journals. According to the Scopus database, the scientific works of Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova have been cited 840 times in the scientific literature (552 citations are presented in the current competition, of which 533 are in journals indexed in Scopus/Web of science). The H-index of Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova is 14 (Scopus). Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova is a scientific advisor of three PhD students, two of whom have successfully defended their dissertations. She is a co-author of a university textbook in propaedeutics of internal diseases. Assoc. Prof. Lambova takes part in scientific projects, including in a successfully finalized national project on knee osteoarthritis with published original scientific results. In the last two academic years, she has study load that exceeds the norm for habilitated lecturers in Medical University of Plovdiv with 80%. The total number of points of the candidate is 10 828.3 (minimum required for occupying the position "Professor" in Medical University of Plovdiv is 1 240 points).

Conclusion

The scientific research works and publications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Lambova have original contributions and significant scientific and practical value. Assoc. Prof. S. Lambova has considerable experience as a practising rheumatologist and university lecturer. In light of the above considerations, I vote positively and propose to the members of the respected Scientific Jury to approve the candidature of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Nikolova Lambova for occupying the academic position "Professor" in scientific specialty "Rheumatology".

28.08.2024
Sofia

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Sheytanov, PhD


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