

# **REVIEW**

from

**assoc. prof. Margarita Dimitrova Stankova, MD, PhD**

**New Bulgarian University, 7.4 Public Health**

**on the scientific work for participation in a competition for the academic position of**

**associate professor, in professional field 7.4 Public Health,**

**announced by the New Bulgarian University in SN no. 50/09/06/2023,**

**with a candidate**

**ch. assist. prof. Svetlozar Metodiev Vassilev, MD, Ph.D**

## **I. Evaluation of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University**

Dr. Svetlozar Vasilev has been working at the NBU since 1996. Between 1996 and 1999 he was a part-time assistant, and after 1999 a full-time assistant at the "Bulgarian Institute of Human Relations".

In 1998 - 1994, he obtained a diploma in medicine from the Medical University in Sofia, and in 1998 - a specialty in psychiatry.

In 2002 - 2008, Dr. Svetlozar Vasilev underwent training at the International Psychoanalytical Association (Eastern European Psychoanalytical Institute) and received a license of psychoanalyst, and in 2010 - 2011 at the Eastern European Psychoanalytical Institute (Amsterdam, Netherlands) he passed training in psychoanalytic supervision.

He began his professional career as a psychiatrist in 1995 as a resident physician in the Department of Social and Counseling Psychiatry, Clinic of Psychiatry, Aleksandrovska Hospital, Sofia, and then continued in the Group Psychiatric Practice "Analytica".

Dr. Vassilev received his PhD with a thesis named "Influence of unfavorable life events in childhood on the occurrence of frequent mental disorders in adults. Epidemiological study" at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 2012, with scientific supervisor prof. Vanya Matanova, PhD and reviewers prof. Sonya Karabelova and assoc. prof. Pavlina Petkova.

In 1996 - 2000, Dr. Svetlozar Vassilev was the Coordinator of the project "Training in psychological competence and creation of care programs for police officers in Bulgaria", financed by "IREX Foundation", USA,

In 1999 - 2000 - Coordinator of the research project "Early detection and prevention of psychoses in adolescents", NBU.

In 2000 - 2003 - Coordinator of the research project "Early interventions in mental disorders", funded by the "Geneva Initiative in Psychiatry".

In 2006 - 2008, Dr. Svetlozar Vassilev was a Researcher for the project of the Ministry of Health "Nationally representative epidemiological study of frequent mental disorders in Bulgaria".

Since 2007, he has been the Coordinator for Bulgaria of the project "Child and Adolescent Mental Health in an Expanding Europe: Revision of Policies and Practices", an international project

funded by the European Commission.

As a candidate for the academic position of associate professor, in professional field 7.4 Public Health, we can conclude that Dr. Vassilev has a long experience at the NBU, mainly at the Bulgarian Institute for Interpersonal Relations, but also as a lecturer at the Department of Health and Social Work in working with students in the fields of social work, health care management, clinical social work, and speech therapy. He works successfully with other departments at the NBU and participates in the training of political science students.

Dr. Vasilev has also developed and successfully maintained several General Education courses - "Human Relations", "Ideas and Practices in Psychoanalysis", "Cinema, Imagination and Psychoanalysis", which were accepted with great interest by students throughout the university during the first two years of their training.

With regard to the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University for the position of associate professor in 7.4. Public Health, Dr. Svetlozar Vasilev fully fulfills the criteria - monograph, publications in the field, developing courses with topics that meet the students' interests, participation in international projects and a large number of citations.

He is a member of the International Psychoanalytic Association; Bulgarian Psychiatric Association; International Association for Early Psychosis.

His candidature is fully in line with the priorities of the Department of Health and Social Work and the future development of professional field 7.4 Public Health.

## **II. Research activities and results**

### **1. Evaluation of the monographic work, or other publications corresponding in volume and content to a monographic work, including an evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the author.**

Dr. Vassilev is the author of a monographic work entitled "Mirror of the Imagination. The Psychoanalysis of the Cinematic Experience". In this book, with a remarkable innovative approach, Dr. Vassilev combines cinema and psychoanalysis and raises topics extremely important and always relevant for humanity such as trauma, war, discussed from a different point of view with interpretations and a focus of human development and the impact of events on the mental functioning.

The monograph shows not only knowledge in a certain field and citation of other authors' work, but also abilities for own interpretations and analyzes on two, at first glance, distant fields. Dr. Vasilev further develops and enriches this different view on the two subjects - art and psychoanalysis, as a founder of the Bulgarian initiative "Psychoanalysis and Cinema", which implements joint projects with Sofia Film Fest, Cinema house, Sofia and NBU.

### **2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other publications It also includes an assessment of the peer review requirement of the publications.**



Dr. Vasilev presents publications in the journal *Social Medicine* on the topic of child development and its relationship with mental health, collections of NBU conferences, chapters and prefaces to books in the field of psychoanalysis.

Dr. Vassilev participated in the competition with 4 publications indexed in Scopus and WoS in co-authorship with international authors. One of these publications, in which the first author is Ronald Kessler "Childhood adversities and adult psychopathology in the WHO World Mental Health Surveys", published in *The British journal of psychiatry* in 2010, is distinguished by an impressive number of citations noted in Scopus - 1620. This paper includes results from a Bulgarian sample in an international study on the relationship between childhood adversity and the onset of mental disorders in adulthood, which is also an essential part of Dr. Vassilev's dissertation work. The data from this study can be used in planning preventive strategies in the field of mental health.

The other two publications, also co-authored, which include papers in the field of mental health, also present data from large international studies and one publication, as a book chapter, presents a topic in the field of psychoanalysis:

Kessler RC., McLaughlin KA, Green JG, Vassilev SV et al. (2010). Childhood adversities and adult psychopathology in the WHO World Mental Health Surveys, *The British Journal of Psychiatry* (2010)197, 378–385, ISSN 00071250 doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.110.080499;

Bruffaerts, R., Demyttenaere, K., Borges, G., Vassilev SV et al. (2010), Childhood adversities as risk factors for onset and persistence of suicidal behavior, *Br J Psychiatry*. 2010 Jul;197(1):20-7. ISSN 14721465 doi: 10.1192/bjp. bp.109.074716;

Szőnyi, G., Kardos, T., Stromme, H., Vassilev, S. (2017). From motivation to organizational integration: Training experiences of recently qualified psychoanalysts, Chapter 1 in "Psychoanalytic Theory: A Review and Directions for Research", NOVA Publishing, ISBN 978-153612494-1, 978-153612484-2.

It should be noted that for the presented publications indexed in Scopus and WoS, Dr. Vassilev has 50 co-authors. The preparation and work on such publications, including many co-authors, representatives of different countries and cultures, is particularly difficult, and despite the existing vicious practice in Bulgaria of evaluating publications with points divided by the number of authors, I believe that such publications should be counted as many times more valuable than others where effort and coordination among team members is much easier. The presence of so many co-authors also presents good teamwork skills and a good placement of Dr. Vassilev in the group of professionals from many countries.

Dr. Vassilev is the compiler, editor and author of the collection "Contemporary Kleinian Psychoanalysis" (2021).

He is the scientific editor of several other health and mental health publications: Bruno Clavier's *Family Phantoms* (2022), J. Bess and M. Ferrero's *The Child and His Complexes* (2023) and *Perhaps We Should talk to someone* by L. Gottlieb (2023).

He completed the English translation of *Experiential Learning through Supervision: The Contribution of Betty Joseph*, a chapter in *Contemporary Kleinian Psychoanalysis*, Hummingbird Publishers, pp. 236-254, ISBN978-619-02-0750-4 ;

### **3. Citation from other authors.**

In the citation from other authors, it can be noted that the candidate presents clear and definite facts for international visibility and recognition of the citation. From 4 total publications - papers and book chapters in Scopus, 1902 citations are reported in 1860 documents. The picture is similar in WoS – 1780 citations out of a total of 1742 publications that cited 4 papers and book chapters with his participation.

### **4. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and application of the obtained results in practice.**

Dr. Svetlozar Vasilev has participated in applied and research projects. He was coordinator of the study "Early Interventions in Psychoses" and "Child and Adolescent Mental Health in an Enlarging Europe" (2007-2010), funded by the European Commission, "Psychoanalytic Training in Different Settings" (2011-2017), funded by the European Psychoanalytical Federation and "Transmission of Psychoanalysis" funded by the International Psychoanalytical Association (2022 -).

These research and applied projects are related to the creation of policies and practices in mental health, as well as to analyzes of the state of mental health in Bulgaria and the needs of specialists and units to provide services for people with mental disorders.

## **III. Learning and teaching activity**

### **1. Teaching courses, work in the electronic training module "MOODLE - NBU", provision of student practices and internships, work with students and doctoral students.**

Dr. Svetlozar Vassilev fulfills the required hours of classroom and non-auditory trainings for the category of associate professor in 7.4 Public Health.

He developed 3 General Education courses, which are chosen by the maximum number of students every year. He provides and supervises internships for students from the following programs: "Social Work" and "Clinical Social Work" in the Group Psychiatric Practice "Analitika", Sofia, which he leads.

Dr. Vasilev ensures the participation of students and doctoral students in international research, seminars, and conferences: regular participation of students from bachelor's and master's programs of the NBU in the forums of the Bulgarian Psychoanalytic Society, participation of doctoral students in a project of the European Psychoanalytic Federation "Psychoanalytic training in different settings: The Path, the Experience, the Outcome"

The candidate develops courses in Moodle: POLS256 INDIVIDUALS, MASSES AND CITIZENSHIP, BP "Politics and Society"; CSPM317 Groups, teams, management, MP "Strategic leadership"; OOOK048 Ideas and Practices in Psychoanalysis, OOOK039 Human Relations, etc.



Dr. Svetlozar Vasilev participates in the Teachers' Cafe and trainings at the Center for Career Development and the Center for Students with Special Educational Needs.

## **2. Work with Erasmus students.**

Dr. Svetlozar Vasilev teaches courses in English:

- POLS256 INDIVIDUALS, MASSES AND CITIZENSHIP, BP Politics and Society;
- CSPM317 Groups, teams, management, MP Strategic leadership;
- CSPM322 PROJECT: MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

## **3. Students' ratings.**

The grades given by the students to Dr. Vassilev's courses are high - over 5 and in some courses over 5.5:

- CSPM 317 Group and Team Management, Spring 20/21-grade 5.5; 5.58;
- MEDM 642 Leadership and Management of Medical Organizations, Spring 20/21 - Grade 5.5; 5.58;
- OOOK048 Ideas and practices in psychoanalysis - grade 5; 5.10;

## **IV. Administrative and public activity**

### **1. Participation in collective management bodies of the NBU.**

Dr. Svetlozar Vasilev is a member of the faculty council at the School of General Studies since 2020.

He participates in the councils of the Department of Health and Social Work.

### **2. Public activity.**

Dr. Svetlozar Vassilev is:

- Chairman of the Bulgarian Psychoanalytic Society,
- Member of the Board of the European Psychoanalytic Institute (European Psychoanalytic Institute)
- Member of the Council of Presidents of the European Psychoanalytic Federation
- East European Chair of the International New Groups Committee of the International Psychoanalytic Association (East European Chair of the International New Groups Committee of the International Psychoanalytic Association).

He has given public lectures on behalf of the NBU:

1. Vassilev, S., Tomov, T., Mladenova, M. (2000) - "Early Detection and Prevention of Psychosis: a Co-ordinated Approach to Intervention", paper delivered on the Conference "Early Intervention in Psychoses", September 2000, Cambridge University, England.
2. Tomov, T., Vassilev, S., Petrova, G., Naneva P., Mladenova, M. (2002) "Prospective study of risperidone in prodromal psychosis", presented on symposium "Neuroscience in Action", Hamburg, Germany 2002.
3. Vassilev, S. (2003) "The influence of stigma on the development of new services in Bulgaria", paper delivered on World Congress of psychiatry, Yokohama, Japan - 2003.
4. Vassilev, S (2013): "Gains and pains in psychoanalytic training and research", paper presented at the 42nd World Congress of the International Psychoanalytic Association, Prague, Czech Republic, August 1-4, 2013;
5. Vassilev, S. (2014) "Institutional functioning of psychoanalytic societies in Europe: Research data from EPF/PIEE Study", paper presented at EPF Annual Conference, Torino, Italy.

### **3. New programs.**

Dr. Vassilev participated in the development of 3 new master's programs:

- MP "Psycho-social interventions with children and families" - successfully launched Fall 18/19,
- MP "Health Management" - RE, successfully launched Fall 17/18 and
- MP "Health Management" - DE, successfully started Fall 19/20

### **V. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)**

Dr. Vassilev is an extremely erudite specialist in the field of mental health, widely informed and curious about considering psychopathology not only as a disease continuum, but also as a societal significance and impact on the individual and society, as well as influencing art. This combination of two fields makes him a unique specialist, able to present a seemingly difficult subject as fascinating and comprehensible to a much wider audience.

He is responsible to the students, to the teaching process and to the patients with whom he works. Dr. Vasilev manages to integrate the field in which he works in an interdisciplinary position and to work successfully with specialists from other professional fields. He has the skills to work in Bulgarian and international teams, and to integrate successfully his skills into international consortia of researchers and applied professionals.

### **VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate**

As a recommendation to the candidate, I would note the opportunity to develop more publication activity and invest efforts in the development of texts as a first author and attract specialists from Bulgaria and other countries, especially considering his serious participation in research and applied projects.

This could also be successfully accomplished by including doctoral students in the next stage of his work at the NBU.

Also, I would recommend more active participation in the work of the department and attracting colleagues for joint activities in the Department of Health Care and Social Work and in other departments of the NBU.

### **Conclusion**

My evaluation of the academic activity of ch. assist. prof. Svetlozar Vassilev, MD, PhD is positive. I thoroughly recommend that the Academic Council of the NBU choose ch. assist. prof. Svetlozar Vassilev, MD, PhD for the position associate professor in professional field 7.4. Public Health

Date 16.10.2023

Signature assoc. prof. Margarita Stankova, MD, PhD

1. Faculty  
1. Date  
(Signature)

VA STANKOVA-STOYANOVA