

STATEMENT

from Prof. Dr. Hristina Tancheva Milcheva, PhD
Faculty of Medicine, Trakia University, Stara Zagora
scientific field 7.4 "Nursing Care",

member of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order No. 253-RK - /29.01.2024 and Decision of the Academic Council No. 5/23.01.2024 of the Rector of New Bulgarian University - Sofia

Regarding: the procedure for the appointment to the academic position of "Associate Professor" on a 1/8 full-time equivalent in the professional field 7.4 "Nursing Care", area of higher education 7. Health Care and Sports with candidate: Momchil Kostov Baev, PhD.

I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University

The documentation presented by the candidate is in compliance with the requirements and criteria of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of New Bulgarian University - Sofia.

II. Research (creative) activity and results

1. Evaluation of the monographic work, creative expressions, or other publications corresponding in volume and completeness to a monographic work, including an assessment of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the author.

For participation in the competition, Momchil Baev presents a detailed Self-Assessment Report according to the minimum required points by the indicators for the academic position of an "associate professor", according to the Regulation for development of academic staff of Republic of Bulgaria and Appendix 2 of the Regulation for development of the academic staff of New Bulgarian University.

From the Report, it is evident that the candidate fully meets, and in some indicators significantly exceeds, the minimum requirements for the academic position of "associate professor". Out of the required total of 570 points by the indicators, the candidate possesses 819.3 points. The candidate has presented a monographic work dedicated to the extremely current issue of the mental health of medical professionals in Bulgaria and its connection with the quality of life of those working in the healthcare sector. The relevance of the problem stems from the serious deficit of medical professionals in the country, as well as the consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Two positive Reviews have been presented, which have reflected all the merits of the monograph and with recommendations for it to become accessible to those working in the healthcare system of the Republic of Bulgaria. **The scientific-applied contributions** of the candidate in the field of mental health of medical professionals in our country include the

development and piloting of a long-term support program, unfolded in several directions through the Astra Forum Foundation, of which the author is the founder and chairman.

For participation in the competition, the candidate has presented 9 full-text articles, 6 of which in foreign journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases (Web of Science), 3 full-text publications in Bulgarian journals, 1 publication in a collection from a national conference, and 3 abstracts in foreign journals. The presented titles are current and reflect the scientific interests and creative searches of the author.

I present my **high evaluation of the monographic work**, and the results of the creative expressions and presented scientific publications of the candidate for "associate professor" Momchil Baev.

2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other submitted publications (creative expressions), made after the appointment to the academic position of "senior assistant" or the academic position of "associate professor" (for candidates for professor).

The research activity of Momchil Baev is directed in the following main directions:

1. Sexual health and HIV: Momchil Baev creates and pilots the first program in Bulgaria for home self-testing for HIV; conducts a scientific review on the vaccination of individuals with HIV against Sars CoV-2 and the risk of contracting the coronavirus among the same population. There are two scientific publications on the topic, one of which is in Web of Science.

2. Refugees and migrants

The candidate develops a dissertation for the acquisition of the PhD degree on the topic "Risks to the health system of the Republic of Bulgaria in the conditions of a refugee crisis in Europe".

The original contributions of the dissertation are:

For the first time in Bulgaria, a comprehensive field socio-medical study on the health status of individuals seeking international protection in the Republic of Bulgaria and the organization of healthcare for them in the context of a refugee crisis, based on a mixed-methodology combining quantitative and qualitative methods, has been conducted.

Comparatively, the Bulgarian and European legislative frameworks for providing healthcare to individuals seeking international protection have been studied, identifying deficiencies in the national regulatory framework, and making recommendations for their elimination. The dissertation has identified the attitudes of doctors, health care professionals, and medical students towards working with migrants, as well as their assessments of the risks to the healthcare system in conditions of a refugee crisis.

The scientific-applied contributions of the dissertation are:

A "Conceptual Model for Preparation and Response of the Healthcare System in Conditions of a Refugee Crisis" is proposed.

A change in the model of attracting personnel for the health service of refugee accommodation centers is proposed, due to the insufficient number of medical staff to cover the health service needs of those accommodated in these structures.

Three scientific publications on the topic have been presented, one of which is in Web of Science.

3. Immunizations and COVID-19

The scientific contributions in the candidate's research work related to this main direction are:

- Creation of an online-based group "Science in Crisis" by Momchil Baev and team, aimed at informing Bulgarian citizens in accessible language about the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Conducting a large-scale study and empirically proving the relationship between anti-epidemic measures and the morbidity and mortality from COVID-19.
- Development of a Handbook for medical professionals on interpersonal communication regarding immunizations, enriched with practical exercises and examples from practice, suitable for all medical professionals dealing with routine and other immunizations.
- Creation of a long-term initiative called "Vaccines School," with monthly webinars for medical professionals on topics related to vaccine prophylaxis.

Two scientific publications on the topic have been presented, one of which is in Scopus.

4. Roma Community

The candidate Momchil Baev conducts his field research and studies on Roma communities on key public health issues. Among the applied contributions in this main scientific direction is the leading participation in two programs with sustainable results: the first for the preparation of students of Roma origin in medical universities, the second for the preparation and training of paramedics of Roma origin for the needs of emergency care in Sofia.

Two scientific publications on the topic have been presented, registered in Web of Science.

I present my high evaluation of the contributions in the other submitted publications and the overall scientific-research activity of the candidate for "associate professor" Momchil Baev.

2. Citations by other authors.

From the presented Report, there are four citations of Momchil Baev's publications in journals referenced in Web of Science.

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

From the presented Report, the candidate Momchil Baev shows exceptional activity and self-initiative in his participation in two international projects, and rich organizational, consultative,

and managerial experience in his participation as a leader in 7 national projects with themes directed towards the creative and scientific interests of the candidate.

My evaluation of the candidate's project activity is very high.

Conclusion:

Based on the discussed contributions to the scientific-research creativity of Momchil Kostov Baev, PhD, I give a **high positive evaluation and my positive vote "Yes"** and propose to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to elect Momchil Kostov Baev, PhD, to the academic position of "Associate Professor" on a 1/8 full-time equivalent in the professional field 7.5 "Nursing Care", area of higher education 7. Health Care and Sports, for the needs of New Bulgarian University - Sofia.

11.03.2024

Stara Zagora