

STATEMENT

on a competition for filling the academic position “*Professor*” in the speciality *Paediatrics* for the needs of the Department of Paediatrics at the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Paediatric, at the Medical University “*Dr.Paraskev Stoyanov*” - Varna

Subject: The announcement competition for filling the academic position *professor* in the field of higher education 7. Health and Sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine and scientific specialty Paediatrics for the needs of the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Paediatrics, at the Medical University – Varna and the Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Clinic at the University Multifunctional Hospital for Active Treatment “*Sveta Marina*” Varna, published in the State Gazette, issue 62 dated 06th of August 2019

Candidate (the only one): Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valeria Ignatova Kaleva, MD

Writing the Statement: Prof. Dr. Boryana Borisova Varbanova, MD
Member of the Scientific Selection Committee appointed in accordance with the Order No. P-109-315/07.10.2019 of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna.

Biographical data, professional and academic development

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valeria Ignatova Kaleva was born on 17th of February 1955. in the village Staro selo, District of Silistra. She completed her secondary education in 1973 and in 1973 she graduated with excellence her secondary education, and in 1979 she graduated from the Higher Medical Institute - Varna with flying colours. She acquired a speciality in childhood diseases in 1984. In 1987 after she had win the competition, she was appointed as an assistant at the Department of Paediatrics at the Institute of Paediatrics - Varna and the Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Clinic (PHOC) at the University Hospital for Active Treatment “*Sv. Marina*” – Varna. In 2005 she defended her doctoral thesis with a subject *Febrile neutropenic and infectious complications for children with oncology diseases*, and obtained her educational and scientific degree *Doctor of Paediatrics*. Since 2005 she is Head of the Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Clinic (PHOC) at the University Hospital for Active Treatment “*Sv. Marina*” – Varna. In 2007 she was elected for associate professor at the Department of Paediatrics at Medical University Varna.

Ass. Prof. Dr. Valeria Kaleva has acquired 3 medical specialities: *Paediatric Diseases, Clinical Haematology and Paediatric Clinical Haematology and Oncology*.

For the period 1990-1992 she has specialized in the Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Clinic (PHOC) and the National Institute of Haematology in Sofia (NIH). She has attended courses and training in European countries: Cyprus, Greece, Germany, Sweden,

Belgium, Portugal on various issues of clinical paediatric oncohematology. In 2013 she acquired a diploma in Healthcare Management.

Ass. Prof. Valeria Kaleva is Head of the Department of Paediatrics at the Medical University of Varna since 2012 to date. From 2006 to 2016 she is a member of Academic Structures - Faculty Council and Academic Council, as well as the Scientific Council of the University.

She has held managerial positions in the management of the University Hospital for Active Treatment "Sv. Marina" – Varna as a member of Board of Directors, a chairwoman of Hospital Committees and Coordinator of innovative transplantation projects.

Scientific and Research activities

Scientometric indicators

Assoc. Prof. V. Kaleva has participated in the competition with a total of 282 scientific works and publications, as 189 of them were realized after she had received the academic *Associate Professor's* title. In 53 publications (28%) she is the only or first author: the only author in 32 scientific works and publications (19%), the first author in 21 publications (12%). In collective works she participated as the second author in 43 (22%), the third in 29 (15%) and the further author in 64 (32%).

According to the enclosed information by the Library of MU - Varna, Assoc. Dr. Kaleva's publications have an impact factor of 64.14. The number of quotes is 65, of which 58 are quotes in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous scientific information databases.

Thematic directions and contributions

The scientific contributions of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kaleva is classified in 6 directions: (1) rare haematological diseases, (2) other haematological disorders and diseases in children age, (3) childhood malignancies, (4) febrile neutropenia, and infectious complications in children with cancer (4) other paediatric patients problems and diseases and (5) haematological guidelines/standards based on evidence.

1. Rare haematological diseases (103 publications)

1.1. Beta Thalassemia and other Thalassemic Syndromes (43 publications)

An impressive number of publications are devoted to various current aspects concerning the pathogenesis, diagnostic and therapeutic approaches, and the contemporary monitoring of the complications of this disease. The contributions in this direction are theoretical, methodological and applied. Eleven articles in national and international periodicals and seven reports/summaries at Bulgarian and international forums interpret the cardiovascular disorders in thalassemia major, as some parameters and correlations are being published for the first time in Bulgarian literature. For the first time in Bulgaria, the epidemiological parameters of endocrine disorders in patients with thalassemia major and their reproductive

health, tubular dysfunction, oral, hepatic and gastrointestinal disorders have been evaluated. For the first time in the country in one guide and several publications, the results of chemotransfusion and iron chelation therapy, the application of splenectomy and rational nutrition in this disease are discussed. Several publications with own clinical contributions have focused on other rare haemolytic anaemias in childhood.

1.2. Haemophilia A and B. Inhibitory haemophilia (27 publications)

For the first time in Bulgaria, the most recent epidemiological and clinical models of haemophilia A and haemophilia B have been presented in one article and 5 reports. For the first time in Bulgaria the strategy for the induction of immune tolerance in patients with inhibitory haemophilia is presented in details. One article and two reports in international publications interpret methods for clinical evaluation of joint changes in haemophilia A. Two articles in international periodicals and seven reports at international and national forums interpret the current therapeutic strategies for haemophilia A. For the first time in Bulgaria, the therapeutic efficacy and economic feasibility of categories of prophylactic regimens with coagulation factors are comparatively analysed. One article and five reports from international and national forums report cases of haemorrhagic incidents in patients with haemophilia A. Several notifications present their own clinical cases of widespread inhibitory haemophilia. Some clinical application of a protocol for the induction of immune tolerance and prophylaxis with FEIBA in patients with inhibitory hemophilia has been presented for the first time in Bulgaria.

Other contributions are related to the current pathogenetic, phenotype, and clinical models of *Willebrand* disease and other rare coagulopathies (7 publications).

1.3. Organization of care for patients with rare haematological diseases (16 publications)

Several publications for the first time in Bulgaria have defined principles and rules for the establishment of an expert working group, institutionalized to optimize the organization and quality of medical and social care for patients with thalassemia. For the first time in Bulgaria, a National Register for Patients with Thalassemia has been established and put into practice. For the first time in Bulgaria, principles and algorithms for the establishment and functioning of a certified expert centre for thalassemia and haemophilia, corresponding to European and world standards, have been defined.

2. Other haematological disorders and diseases

Four articles and three reports in national forums interpret the practical algorithms for behavioural neutropenia, anaemia, and haemorrhagic diathesis in childhood with practically applied contributions. 4 publications examine rare diseases in paediatric haematology.

3. Malignancies in childhood (54 publications)

One section of the monograph works/textbook, two review articles and three reports in national forums interpret the diagnostic and therapeutic problems associated with the most current childhood malignancies. Initial semiotic patterns of the most common childhood neoplasms and causes of diagnostic delay have been structured. For the first time in Bulgarian literature on continuing medical education are presented contemporary paradigms for pleural effusions in childhood malignancies.

For the first time in Bulgaria six publications summarize clinical-morphological and flow cytometric data for children with newly diagnosed and recurrent acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) and present parameters for immunophenotypic modulation.

For the first time in Bulgaria multicenter data on therapeutic efficacy in acute (AML) and chronic (CML) myeloblasts in childhood have been presented. Three articles in national and international journals and two reports/summaries at national and international forums summarize their own clinical practices related to the peculiarities of clinical and laboratory indicators of acute lymphoblastic in children leukemia and the undesirable immediate, early and late cytostatic adverse events. For the first time in the world literature, a case of the simultaneous occurrence of ETV6-RUNX1 and BCR-ABL transcripts has been reported in a child with B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia. For the first time in Bulgaria a child with blast plasmacytoid dendritic cell neoplasia has been described.

Two articles in national and international periodicals and seven reports/summaries in national forums discuss symptoms and adverse events of cytostatic therapy.

Seven studies present clinical experience from single-center and national multi-center tests on the therapeutic approach in the treatment of childhood lymphomas. For the first time in Bulgariato children with Hodgkin's disease has been applied Euro Net-PHL-C1 protocol, as a therapeutic standard.

Three sections of clinical guidance, two articles and five reports/summaries at national and international forums interpret diagnostic, prognostic and therapeutic issues in solid childhood tumors. They present for the first time in Bulgaria summarized multicenter results for histological, prognostic and therapeutic parameters in the most common solid tumors. Eight studies, one article and 5 reports are devoted to upgrading clinical models of therapeutic behaviour in childhood abdominal and renal solid tumors and their rare occurrences.

4. Immunosuppression, febrile neutropenia, infectious complications at cancer patients (14 publications)

One plenary report and one article for the first time in Bulgaria provide recommendations for the behaviour of febrile neutropenia and an analysis of the incidence and structure of infectious complications of febrile neutropenia at children patients with cancer.

Six articles in the national periodical and one report/summaries on an international forum interpret the clinical aspects of infectious complications in children with malignant haemopathy and solid tumors. For the first time in Bulgaria the frequency, structure and microbiological spectrum of various categories of infectious complications in patients with cancer are analysed. For the first time, evaluation criteria for oral and dental status are introduced and probiotic prophylaxis of oral mucositis is proposed. Four publications describe the clinical manifestation of specific rare infectious complications and related personal therapeutic decisions.

5 . Other paediatric problems and diseases

Three articles in the national periodical and two reports/summaries in national forums present rare non-malignant diseases in pediatric practice and current aspects of drug therapy.

6. Standards, methodological instructions (6 pieces)

Several sections of national guidelines for the first time in Bulgaria provide recommendations for the behaviour of febrile neutropenia and discuss the GRADE approach as a method for drawing up evidence-based clinical guidelines.

Educational and Lecture activities

Assoc. Prof. Kaleva has 35 years of experience as a lecturer on *paediatrics* to students in the fields of *medicine, nurse, midwife, radiology laboratory assistant and public health inspector*. She has 188 hours of average annual training over the last 3 years, with a standard of 126 hours.

A pilot project for vocational training has been developed under her guidance for the acquisition of a professional qualification degree for the professions *health assistant and caregiver*, on the basis of which MU - Varna has received a training license in both professions in the speciality *health care* at the Faculty of Public Health.

She is the head of three post-graduate students on paediatrics and four post-graduate students on paediatric haematology and oncology. Assoc. Prof. V. Kaleva is a member of committees for the acquisition of a clinical speciality in the Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Clinic.

She is the head of one graduating student and five PhD students, two of whom have successfully defended their dissertations, respectively in 2016 and 2017.

She is a reviewer of thesis and doctoral dissertations in the field of medicine, scientific works and papers of candidates for the *chief assistant, associate professor and professor* acquisition.

She is also a member of the editorial boards of scientific journals/magazines - *Clinical Haematology, Rare Diseases and Paediatrics*.

Since 2011 she is a member of the Administrative Board of the Bulgarian Medical Association of Haematology and the Administrative Board of the Bulgarian Paediatric Association (BPA), she is a member of the Regional staff – Varna of BPA, a member of Bulgarian Medical Association on paediatric oncology, Bulgarian Oncology Association, the European Association for Haematology (EHA), the European Association of Paediatric Oncology (SIOPE) and the International Network of Clinicians for Endocrinopathies in Thalassaemia and Adolescence Medicine (ICET).

Public and expert activities

Assoc. Prof. Valeria Kaleva is a member of the Committee on Rare Diseases, Expert Council on the medical specialty *paediatric haematology and oncology* at the Ministry of Health, National Council on Haemophilia at the Advisory Council *Partnership for Health* at the Council of Ministers and a permanent chairwoman of the National Working Group on Thalassaemia and Hemophilia at BMAH. Since 2011 she is an external expert of the NHIF and an expert at the Commission for the Treatment of Children Abroad at the NHIF.

In 2007 she established a Thalassaemia Working Group at the BMAH, which has conducted over 25 national scientific events for physicians, medical professionals and patients. The monograph *Handbook of Clinical Behaviour in Beta-Thalassaemia* was published under her editorship and with her assistance the first registry for rare diseases in Bulgaria - the Register for Patients with Thalassaemia, was created.

Under her guidance in 2009 a Working Group on Haemophilia was also established, conducting more than 20 national scientific events for physicians, healthcare professionals and patients.

In the field of paediatric oncohaematology, she is involved in the organization of scientific forums of a national and regional significance, including hosting meetings of national and international kind.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kaleva participates in the creation and updating of medical standards and therapeutic algorithms in paediatrics, paediatric onco-hematology, clinical hematology and medical oncology. Under her leadership in 2013 at the University Hospital for Active Treatment "Sv. Marina" - Varna was opened the first Expert Center for Rare Diseases in Bulgaria - Expert Center for Coagulopathies and Rare Anemias (ECCRA), and in 2017 under her leadership started the first hematopoietic Cell Transplantation Center for Children.

Participation in projects related to professional institutions/networks or public organizations

- 5 projects in total, 2007-2018

Membership in public organizations

- 3 organizations in total

Assoc. Prof. Kaleva was honored annually with *the Doctors We Trust Award* and in 2017 was elected as a member of the Bulgarian Medical League. In 2011 she received award for *the Contribution to the Development of Medicine and Health Care of Open Society - Varna*, in 2017 – with the award *the Contribution to the Development and Implementation of Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation* by the Mayor of Varna and in 2019 - an honorary plaque for contribution in the field of rare diseases in Bulgaria by the Information Center for Rare Diseases and Orphan Drugs (ICRDOD).

Conclusion

The scientific presence of Assoc. Prof. Valeria Kaleva in Bulgarian Paediatric Onco-Hematology has an emphasis on topical thematic, methodological competence, analytical and clinical applicability. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kaleva is also a highly erudite clinician who has concentrated her efforts on innovative methods of diagnosis and therapy in her specialty. Her academic development as a lecturer and her extensive professional and social activities further enrich the profile of Assoc. Prof. Kaleva of a leading specialist in paediatric science and practice in our country. Due to her scientific achievements, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kaleva enjoys respect as a scientist also abroad.

Based on the significant scientific contribution in the field of Bulgarian Paediatric Onco-Haematology, Academic Erudition and Social Authority of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valeria Kaleva, I propose to the Honorable Scientific Selection Committee to vote for the Academic Position Professor of Paediatrics, Department Paediatrics, Medical University-Varna award.

22.10.2019

Prof. Dr. Boryana Varbanova

