

# STATEMENT OF OPINION

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Member of the scientific jury, according to Order № P-109-173/23.04.2021 of the Rector of the Medical University - Varna

**Regarding** competition for the occupation of the academic position “*Professor*” in the higher education field 3. “*Social, Economic and Legal Sciences*”, professional subfield 3.7 “*Administration and Management*”, scientific specialty “*Organisation and Management outside the Sphere of Material Production*” for the needs of the Teaching Sector “Assistant Pharmacist” at the Medical College – Varna, announced in the State Gazette, Issue 17 from 26 February 2021.

**Associate Professor Antoaneta Zdravkova Tsvetkova, PhD** is the only applicant in this competition. She has submitted all the required documents in compliance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Application and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at Medical University – Varna.

## **1. Professional development of the applicant**

Antoaneta Tsvetkova graduated from the Medical College - Varna as a professional bachelor in the specialty “Assistant Pharmacist” in 1992. In 2007, she graduated with a bachelor degree in Health Care Management, and in 2008, she obtained a Master degree in the same specialty at the Medical University - Varna. In 2015, the applicant successfully defended PhD thesis “Social and Pharmacoconomics Aspects of the Use of Over-the-Counter Medicines“ and obtained the educational and scientific degree “Doctor of Philosophy” in the scientific specialty “Organisation and Management outside the Sphere of Material Production“, professional subfield 3.7. “Administration and Management”. In 2016, she acquired a specialty in Health Economics. In 2021, Antoaneta Tsvetkova further expanded her qualification and obtained a Master degree in Health Technology Assessment with Pharmacoconomics from the Medical University - Sofia.

The candidate passed several qualification courses for continuing education and specializations in the topics of pharmacoconomics, hospital pharmacy, health technology assessment, pricing and reimbursement of medicinal products, pharmaceutical marketing, pharmaceutical legislation and market, etc., which contribute to her professional development as an academic teacher, researcher and expert.

Antoaneta Tsvetkova began her career in 1998 at the hospital pharmacy of the Military Medical Academy - Varna, after which she held various positions in organizations operating

in wholesale and retail of medicinal products. She started her academic career in 2010, initially as a part-time lecturer, and in the following year as an assistant professor at the Teaching Sector “Assistant Pharmacist” to the Medical College - Varna. In 2015, after winning a competition, she held the academic position “Associate Professor” in the specialty “Organization and Management outside the Sphere of Material Production”, professional subfield 3.7. “Administration and Management”. Between 2012 and 2020, she occupied the position of Head of the Training Sector “Assistant Pharmacist”, and in June 2020, she was elected Director of the Medical College - Varna.

Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova is a member of the Program Council of the Medical College - Varna and the College Council. She participates actively in the organization of national and international scientific forums and seminars. The candidate coordinates the contacts between employers and students related to the practical training and the subsequent professional realization. Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova participated in eight scientific and educational projects, of which four were international.

The applicant successfully combines the academic career with various public and expert activities. Since 2015, she has been a municipal councillor; between 2015 and 2019, she chaired the Standing Committee on Healthcare; and since 2019, she has been elected chair of the Standing Committee on Science and Education at the Varna Municipal Council. Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova participates as a member of a number of committees and commissions; she is a member of the Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS Prevention at the Varna Municipal Council and member of the General Meeting of Shareholders of MHAT “St. Anna – Varna” as a representative of the Municipality of Varna. Between 2017 and 2019, she participated as an expert in a number of expert groups for health technology assessment at the National Centre for Public Health and Analysis.

The applicant uses English and Russian languages for professional and research purposes.

Along with the professional training and practical experience, the active public engagement and expert activity develop the professional competence of Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova and contribute to the achieved results in the teaching and research.

## **2. Characteristics and assessment of the scientific publications and research activity of the applicant**

The presented publications demonstrate the scientific productivity of the candidate and the recognisability of the scientific production. The standardized academic reference for participation in the competition proves the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position “Professor” in compliance with the Regulations for Application of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Medical University - Varna.

For participation in this competition, a total of 24 full-text scientific publications have been submitted after acquiring the academic position “Associate Professor”, including:

- monograph, habilitation thesis – 1;
- published book based on a dissertation thesis for the educational and scientific degree “Doctor of Philosophy” – 1;
- papers published in scientific journals – a total of 19, as follows:
  - in scientific journals, peer-reviewed and indexed in worldwide-renowned databases with scientific information – a total of 5;
  - in non-referred scientific journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes – a total of 14;
- textbooks – a total of 3.

Of the presented publications, six are independent, and the rest are co-authored, as in four of them Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova is the first author, and nine of the publications are in English. The candidate’s papers have been published in renowned national and international scientific journals, and several are referenced and indexed in Web of Science. The publications cover topical research problems, written in appropriate scientific style and show awareness of scientific issues related to the research areas.

In addition, Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova has participated in over 30 national and international scientific forums, of which four scientific conferences abroad, organized by renowned research and professional organizations. She has participated in several research projects, which also prove her theoretical training and research skills. The results of these projects support both the teaching process and the practice in the field.

Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova is a supervisor of two PhD students and three graduates. She supervises and supports the research activities of students in different specialties.

Her research covers topical scientific problems related to significant issues and challenges in health care. The main research topics can be systematized in the following research areas:

- health system analysis and regional health policy;
- marketing of OTC-medicines;
- health technology assessment;
- supervising and development of pharmaceutical care.

The most important for the current competition is the independent monograph *"Regional Health Policy - Evaluation and Optimization Opportunities. Promotion of Policies of the Municipality of Varna Related to the Health of its Residents for the Period 2015-2019"*. It is a comprehensive study of current issues of particular importance for health policy at the regional level. The analysis of the policies of the Municipality of Varna aimed at improving the health of the population has been considered in the broader context of the legislative framework at the European, national and local level. The assessment of the implemented

policies is related to some socioeconomic effects and the reform processes in the health system. Historically, the process of decentralization in health care has been considered, and in this context, the opportunities and responsibilities of local authorities for the development of regional health policy are analyzed, as well as the created conditions for civic participation in setting priorities at the local level. The evaluation of the results for the period 2015-2019 and the assessed good practices are reliable ground for the development of the regional health policy with an emphasis on prevention and prophylaxis. Based on the analysis and evaluation, recommendations for the development of the regional health policy in compliance with the current trends in health needs and the current priorities for developing the health systems are proposed. The author demonstrates skills to study and systematize national and foreign experience, analyze and assess processes and results, summarize conclusions and provide possible solutions.

Of particular importance in the scientific publications of the candidate are the studies related to the health technology assessment and the possibilities for the application of modern health technologies by the prevention, screening and therapy of some chronic diseases. The impact of new health technologies on the health system has been studied, and proposals have been defined to improve patient access. The impact of new technologies on the treatment of some chronic diseases has been analyzed, including the financial perspective of the health and social systems. Scientific publications further develop some ideas and statements related to contemporary issues of health policy, making proposals for the involvement of regional authorities in this process. Most of the studies are practice-oriented.

Several publications of Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova are related to the supervision and development of pharmaceutical care. The topical problem of compliance (adherence) to drug therapy and the population's attitudes towards self-treatment has been studied. Some prerequisites for increasing the degree of adherence to the therapy, the role of the pharmacist in this process, and factors and conditions important for improving the quality of pharmaceutical care have been analyzed. The importance of pharmaceutical care for safety and cost reduction has been studied.

The studies on the market of OTC products and food supplements and consumers' behaviour and characteristics is also very novel. Market trends and the factors that influence the use of such products have been investigated. The attitudes towards self-medication and the demographic characteristics of the patients in comparison with the users of OTC drugs in other countries have been highlighted. Based on the analysis of decision-making related to uncertainty, an algorithm of therapeutic decisions by patients with chronic non-communicable diseases has been developed, a decision analysis of importance for the choice of therapy and costs reduction.

In general, the presented scientific papers address current topics, analyze significant contemporary issues in health care and are characterized by in-depth analysis and potential for applying the results in practice. They are also important for the training of students, postgraduates and doctoral students.

The scientific work of Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova is reflected in the Bulgarian and foreign scientific literature. In connection with the minimum requirements for the academic position “Professor”, a total of eight citations in the scientific databases Web of Science and Scopus are presented. In addition, 46 citations were found in the Google Scholar database with h-index 5, which reflects the scientific community’s interest. The scientific profiles in Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ORCID provide an opportunity to trace the impact of the candidate’s scientific work.

### **3. General assessment of the applicant’s teaching activity**

Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova has over 11 years of experience in the specialty and over nine years of academic experience at the Medical University - Varna. In the last five years, her workload was over 600 academic hours annually and significantly exceeded the fixed annual workload. According to the submitted reference, the candidate’s teaching experience meets the requirements of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University - Varna.

The applicant actively participates in the teaching process. She holds lectures and seminars in several courses: *Applied Economics in the Healthcare and Pharmaceutical Sector, Organization and Pharmaceutical Care by OTC-drugs, Social Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Legislation, Medical Devices, Pharmaceutical Care and Pharmacoeconomics* in the specialties at the Medical College, Faculty of Pharmacy and Faculty of Public Health. She supervises the study practice and the undergraduate internship of students in the specialty “Assistant Pharmacist“ at the Medical College - Varna. The applicant is a member of state examine commissions.

Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova is a co-author in the textbooks *Pharmacoeconomics, Methodical guidelines for practical training of students in the professional field of Nursing Care*, and a textbook on social pharmacy and pharmaceutical legislation.

### **4. Critical remarks and recommendations**

My recommendation to the future research activity of the candidate is for greater activity in international publications, including with an impact factor. The results of the conducted studies can be systematized into conceptual and theoretical solutions, for which Assoc. Prof. Tsvetkova has the necessary professional competence, knowledge and experience.

### **5. Conclusion**

The assessment of the scientific and teaching activities of the candidate shows compliance with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Application and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University – Varna for the academic

position “Professor“. The candidate is an established researcher and lecturer with theoretical training and practical knowledge in the considered fields.

The overall assessment of the professional development, scientific work and teaching activity of the candidate is a reason to give a positive opinion and propose Assoc. Prof. Antoaneta Zdravkova Tsvetkova, PhD to hold the academic position “*Professor*” in the higher education field 3. “*Social, Economic and Legal Sciences*”, professional subfield 3.7 “*Administration and Management*”, scientific specialty “*Organisation and Management outside the Sphere of Material Production*” for the needs of the Teaching Sector “Assistant Pharmacist” at the Medical College – Varna.

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Varna



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