

To the honorable members of the Scientific Jury
Designated by Order No. P-109-276/25.05.2023
Of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna

Statement of Opinion

by **Assoc. Prof. Lubomira Nikolaeva-Glomb, MD, PhD**
Head of the Virology Department
of the National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases (NCIPD), Sofia

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition for occupation
of the academic position "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Virology"
for the needs of the Department of Microbiology and Virology
at the Medical University of Varna

In the competition for the academic position "Assistant Professor" in the field of higher education 4. "Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics"; professional field 4.3. "Biological Sciences", published in the State Gazette, issue. 28/28.03.223, one candidate has submitted an application, namely: Denitsa Todorova Tsaneva-Damyanova, **MD, PhD**, chief assistant professor at the Department of Microbiology and Virology at the Medical University of Varna and Head of the Virology Laboratory at the Status Laboratory in Varna.

I **hereby declare** that I have no conflict of interest within the meaning of Art. 4, para. 5 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB). I have no common publications with Dr. Denitsa Todorova Tsaneva-Damyanova.

1. Received materials for review.

The submitted set of materials for participation in the competition complies with the requirements of LDASRB, its Implementing Regulations and the Rules on the conditions and procedure for acquiring academic degrees and occupying academic positions at the University of Varna.

2. Applicant's biography and career development

Denitsa Todorova Tsaneva-Damyanova holds a Master's Degree in Medicine from the Medical University of Varna since 2007, holds a PhD in Virology since 2019 and has

acquired a specialty in Virology in 2012. Her PhD thesis is developed at the Medical University of Varna under the scientific guidance of Assoc. Prof. Liliya Ivanova and is dedicated to the prevalence of viral hepatitis B and D in the general population and among patients with chronic liver diseases. The duration of the post-vaccinal immune response after hepatitis B immunization is also studied in the dissertation.

Since 2015, Dr. Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova has occupied the position of Assistant Professor and Chief Assistant Professor at the Department of Microbiology and Virology at the Medical University of Varna. Since 2012, she is the head of the Virology Laboratory at the Status Laboratory in Varna.

Dr. Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova, MD, PhD demonstrates an upward career development.

3. Scientometric indicators.

Dr. Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova has submitted a monograph in Bulgarian with a total volume of 128 pages (100 points), a chapter of a book published in English abroad in co-authorship, which is dedicated to viral infections in transplanted and immunocompromised patients (15 points), 15 journal articles, of which 8 with Q3 (120 points) and 7 with Q4 (84 points), a list of 16 participations in international and national scientific forums and 23 participations in webinars. She participated also in the implementation of 4 research projects. The works of Dr. Tsaneva-Damyanova have been evaluated by the scientific community and have been quoted a total of 26 times by Bulgarian and foreign authors.

Dr. Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova meets the national minimum requirements and covers, and in some respects exceeds, the scientometric indicators required for occupying the academic position of associate professor at the Military Medical Academy.

4. Scientific research activities, main scientific areas and contributions.

Several scientific trends could be outlined in the research activities of Dr. Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova, One of them is related to hepatitis viruses and is *de facto* a continuation of her scientific interests, already stated in her dissertation. The monograph written by her refers exactly to this trend, presenting the hepatitis D virus in detail. The monograph also includes data from her own research conducted in the period 2016-2021. One of her scientific articles

in this trend presents data from sequencing and genotyping of the hepatitis D virus, thus defining the dominant genotype circulating in northeastern Bulgaria. In another significant publication of hers in this field, the duration of post-vaccination immunity in those vaccinated against hepatitis B was studied.

Another trend in the scientific interests of Dr. Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova is herpes viruses, and in particular the Epstein-Barr virus and the cytomegalovirus. Part of the presented publications are dedicated to seroepidemiological studies on the prevalence, the frequency of primary infection and the clinical significance of infections with those viruses among the population in North-Eastern Bulgaria. An evaluation of the available serological tests was also made. As a marker for Epstein-Barr virus reactivation, the determination of anti-EA (D) IgG has been proposed as a possible assessment of the risk of developing lymphoproliferative diseases in immunosuppressed patients.

Virus infections in transplanted and immunocompromised patients constitute the third trend in Dr. Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova's research. Special attention is paid to the role of hepatitis and herpes viruses. In one of the publications, Dr. Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova presented a seroepidemiological study on the frequency of infection with hepatitis B and C viruses among patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphomas, and a higher frequency than the national average was found. In patients with Hodgkin's disease or non-Hodgkin's lymphomas, as well as in other immunosuppressed patients, the real-time PCR method was applied in comparison with serological markers in order to more accurately determine the degree of reactivation of the infection.

Dr. Tsaneva-Damyanova has paid attention to the COVID-19 pandemic also. In the very first pandemic year, i.e. in 2020, Dr. Tsaneva-Damyanova conducted a seroepidemiological and screening study for the presence of specific antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 among more than 500 people. The immediate reaction of Dr. Tsaneva-Damyanova in the search for the spread of the virus and determining the rate of formation of herd immunity contributes to the preparation of algorithms for the prevention and treatment of SARS-CoV-2 infection in our country.

Dr. Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova demonstrates lasting scientific interests in topical areas and contributes to the enrichment and dissemination of scientific achievements.

5. Educational and teaching activity.

Dr. Tsaneva-Damyanova takes part in the teaching activities conducted at the Medical University of Varna by delivering lectures and conducting practical exercises. Her teaching load exceeds 250 semester hours per annum.

6. Compliance with the requirements of LDASRB, its Implementing Regulations and the Regulations on the conditions and procedure for acquiring academic degrees and occupying academic positions at the Medical University of Varna:

| Conditions and criteria | | Compliance |
|---|--|--|
| PhD in professional field 4.3. "Biological Science", Virology PhD programme | | Yes – 2019 |
| Not less than 5 years: occupation of the academic position of assistant professor or chief assistant professor | | Yes – since 2015 |
| occupation of lecturer's position | | Yes – >250 hours a year during the last 5 years |
| practical work as a specialist in virology | | Yes – >10 years |
| recognized specialty in the health care system in the same specialty | | Yes – since 2012 |
| Minimum national requirements | | |
| Indicator | Required minimum points | Points of the applicant |
| Group of indicators "A" | 50 | 50 |
| Group of indicators "C" | 100 | 100 (monograph) |
| Group of indicators "D" | 200, of them ≥ 60 according to indicator G7 | 207, of them 192 according to indicator G7 |
| Group of indicators "E" | 50 | $26 \times 2 = \mathbf{52}$ |

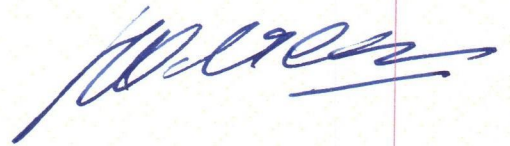
Conclusion

The papers submitted for review contain original scientific research and applied research contributions. The publications have received recognition in our country and abroad, according to the quotes. Teaching activity is also present. The applicant fulfills the minimum national requirements as well as the additional quantitative criteria, as adopted at the Medical University of Varna, for occupation of the academic position

of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty of "Virology" in section 4.3. "Biological Sciences". I definitely provide my positive assessment and recommendation to the Scientific Jury to prepare a reasoned proposal for the selection of **Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova**, MD, PhD, to occupy the academic position of Associate Professor in Virology for the needs of the Department of Microbiology and Virology at the Medical University of Varna.

Sofia, 10 August 2023

Opinion prepared by:



Assoc. Prof. Lubomira Nikolaeva-Glomb, MD, PhD