

STATEMENT

From

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By Order No. P-109-276/25.05.2023 of the Rector of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov"- Varna, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury and as per protocol No. 1/06.06.2023, I present my statement:

Regarding: Competition for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics 4.3 Biological sciences, scientific specialty "Virology", for the needs of the Department of Microbiology and Virology at the Faculty of Medicine, Medical University-Varna, announced in SG No. 28/28.03.2023 with a candidate: Chief Assistant Denitsa Todorova Tsaneva-Damyanova, MD, PhD

Short data about the candidate's career development and qualifications:

Dr. Denitsa Todorova Tsaneva-Damyanova graduated from Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna in 2007 with a Master's degree in Medicine. Her professional path began at Emergency center Varna and simultaneously as a sales representative at UCB-The Allergy company. In 2008, she enrolled in a specialization in virology, which she successfully completed, and since 2012 she has been a clinical virologist. From 01.02.2012 until now, she is working as a virologist and head of the virology laboratory at MDL "Status", Varna. Dr. Tsaneva's scientific activity began in 2015 as a part-time assistant, and since 2016 she has become a full-time assistant professor at the Department of Microbiology and Virology in Medical University Varna. From 2019 until now she has been working as chief assistant after obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Virology" with the topic of the doctoral studies "Clinical-laboratory study on the prevalence of viral hepatitis B and D in the general population and in patients with chronic liver diseases in Northeastern Bulgaria. Duration of HBV the post-vaccinational immune response in vaccinated individuals". In 2021, Dr. Tsaneva obtained a Master's degree in Health Management and Medico-Social Care from Medical University Varna.

From the autobiographical data it is evident that Dr. Tsaneva builds qualification and scientific experience in scientific forums and webinars (total 39), most of them international and from participation in research projects (total 4).

Dr. Tsaneva speaks and writes English fluently (Certificate of equivalency examination in a foreign language with intensive study of the English language from the Fifth Foreign Language High School "Ioan Exarch"-Varna). She speaks French at an intermediate level (language course at Alliance français) and has also studied German. She owns excellent computer and presentational skills.

Scientific production presented by the candidate:

The submitted scientific production presented by dr. Tsaneva definitely has met and even exceeded the minimum scientific metrics. In 2019, she defended a dissertation on the topic "Clinical-laboratory study on the spread of viral hepatitis B and D in the general population and in patients with chronic liver diseases in Northeastern Bulgaria. Duration of HBV- post-vaccinational immune response in vaccinated individuals" (50 points). Her monograph entitled "Hepatitis D virus (HDV) satellite in the orbit of the chronic hepatitis B virus an overview and own data", is equal to 100 points. It represented serious scientific work, demonstration of analyticity and profound scientific knowledge. A synthesized overview of a large array of literature data was made, including personal studies conducted in the period 2016-2021. The history and hypotheses of the origin of the hepatitis D virus were interestingly presented, followed by specific information with an emphasis on methods of diagnosis and the routes of transmission of HDV in the world and in Bulgaria, as well as establishing the dominant HDV genotype (HDV genotype I) circulating in Bulgaria. The scientific information in the monograph was presented clearly, which makes it a comfortable suitable for a wide range of students and specialists with interests in the field of medicine, virology and biology.

There are 15 scientific publications published in referenced and indexed journals in global databases indicated in section D (D7 and D8), including one chapter of a book with a total of 207 points out of the required minimum-200 points. Additionally, another publication for 12 points has been presented as well as two chapters from a manual for students of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and medical college. Fifteen from the scientific works submitted for habilitation competition are in English. Dr.Tsaneva is single author in 3 publications and co-author in 13 of all presented. In one publication she is the first and in one publication is a second author, in two publications she is a third author. All of the publications of dr.Tsaneva are with practical focus and represent her in-depth scientific researches. The main studies and analyzes are based on hepatitis viruses- in the doctoral thesis, the monograph and in 4 of the publications. The candidate presents epidemiological data on EBV and CMV and laboratory analysis markers in different groups of patients (8 publications). A target group is the group of transplanted and immunocompromised individuals (4 publications) and a book chapter. The COVID 19 pandemic has been discussed in 1 article.

The number of citations for indexed publications in global databases and presented in to the library reference is 26, which meets the competition requirements.

Dr. Tsaneva participated in 16 national and international forums and has been presented reports and posters in 13 of them. Dr.Tsaneva was the main researcher into the investigation "HDV genotypic profile in Bulgaria - laboratory and clinical manifestations" and she took part in 4 other scientific projects under the "Science" fund.

The candidate's publication activity reflects a review of a large volume of scientific information, excellent knowledge of the requirements for publication of scientific manuscripts, accurate and faithful presentation of the results of her own scientific research. The publications highlighted the research and academics qualities of dr.Tsaneva. They serve as the benchmark for research experience and analytical skills and are a real proof of professionalism and scientific potential.

Scientific achievements and contributions:

Dr. Tsaneva's professional and research aspirations are related to improving the quality of the diagnostic, educational and research process, base on her publication activities, citations and teaching commitment. The most important and practically useful contributions of dr.Tsaneva are related to the studies for hepatitis viruses. For the first time in Bulgaria, the hepatitis D virus was sequenced and genotyped and the dominant HDV genotype was determined. The duration of immunity after hepatitis B vaccination was evaluated and the need for anti-HBs follow-up and administration of a booster dose has been analyzed. A higher frequency of HBsAg and anti-HCV was found in patients with non-Hodgkin's lymphomas, as well as an abrupt increase in HBV and HCV replication levels in immunocompromised individuals, which required more strict laboratory control for these patients. Dr. Tsaneva's scientific researches are also related to the distribution of CMV and EBV, with analysis and practical evaluation of diagnostic markers and laboratory tests in patients with primary infection, in transplanted patients and in patients with oncohematological diseases, highlighting the essential role of PCR diagnostics for these individuals. Dr.Tsaneva has conducted the first seroepidemiological screening study for Bulgaria (2020) based on the spread of antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 in ambulatory patients, in order to define the spread of the COVID-19 and the strength of collective immunity to then. Afterwards I have read all the information in this article. I accepted and highly appreciated the presented research studies and the stated contributions to them.

Academic teaching activity:

The presented reference No. 099-933/03.04.2023, shows total teaching experience of 8 years, 2 months and 14 days. Dr. Tsaneva conducts lectures and practical seminars in Microbiology and virology for students in specialty Medicine (Bulgarian and English language program), practical seminars in Microbiology and virology for students in specialty Dental Medicine (Bulgarian and English language program) and practical seminars in Microbiology and virology for students in Pharmacy (Bulgarian language program). She is participating in the development of protocols for the students' practical exercises. Dr.Tsaneva is also a lecturer in the faculty discipline "Clinical Microbiology" for medical students, with the topic "Hepatitis B virus and Occult Hepatitis B viral infection". As per the official reference for the auditory engagement, marking the last 5 academic years it is evident that the number of academic hours has been exceeding the legally recognized minimum of 220 hours for teaching employment- for the academic year 2021/2022 it is 19 lectures and 254 exercises, mainly in English. The data presented support her extensive teaching practice and experience.

Personal opinion: Dr. Tsaneva is an excellent and ambitious specialist with responsible attitude to academic teaching. She is well- organized and dedicated specialist, with interests towards all aspects of the scientific domain. I appreciate her confidence and her aim to constantly upgrade her level into the academic field.

Conclusion:

The originally presented scientific production, based on own investigations of dr.Tsaneva, shows research experience and high quality professionalism. Her active teaching activity, strive for self-improvement and scientific growth are qualities that guarantee a successful academic career. This together with the materials presented for the competition fully comply with the minimal requirements 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 the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov"- Varna allow me to express my positive assessment. I strongly recommend to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to award Denitsa Tsaneva-Damyanova, MD, PhD with the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional direction 4.3 Biological sciences, specialty "Virology", for the needs of "Microbiology and Virology" Department of Medical University Varna.

31.07.2023

Varna

Assoc. Prof. Tsvetelina Kostadinova MD, PhD

