

SCIENTIFIC OPINION

Subject: Competition announced for the academic position of professor in the field of higher education 7. *Healthcare and sports*, professional field 7.1 *Medicine*, and scientific specialty *Hygiene (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.)* for the needs of the Hygiene Education Sector, Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology at the Faculty of Public Health of the Medical University - Varna, published in the State Gazette, issue 61 on 23.07.2021

Candidate (sole): Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova, MD

Scientific opinion from: Prof. Dr. Valeria Ignatova Kaleva, MD, member of the Scientific Jury by order R-109-391 / 20.09.2021 of the Rector of MU - Varna for preparation of a Scientific opinion

1. Brief biographical and professional data about the candidate

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Pancheva was born on November 15, 1972 in the city of Varna. She graduated from the First Language High School in Varna in 1991 and the Medical University - Varna in 1997. Her professional development as a doctor began at the Clinic of Pediatrics of UMHAT St. Marina - Varna in 1997 and passes through Polyclinic Ayladanovi, AMCSMP Vidia and Multidisciplinary Clinic for Pediatrics UMHAT St. Marina - Varna. From 2013 to the present she works as a pediatrician at AMCSMP St. Stilian in Varna.

Her academic career started in 2003 at MU - Varna as a full-time doctoral student at the *Department of Pediatrics* and reached the position of associate professor at the *Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology* in 2014, which position she currently holds. In 2008 she defended her dissertation on *Probiotics in the prevention of dyspepsia in hospitalized children aged 0-7 years* and obtained the educational and scientific degree of *Doctor of Pediatrics*.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Pancheva has recognized specialties in *Pediatrics* in 2003 and in *Nutrition and Dietetics* in 2017.

The postgraduate qualification of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Pancheva is mainly related to children's gastroenterological diseases, nutrition and dietetics and includes over 15 specialized courses and trainings in Bulgaria and abroad.

2. Evaluation of the scientific activity of the candidate

The presented list of the scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Pancheva includes 37 titles. After elimination of those considered for defense of the *dissertation* and publications until the academic position of associate professor, 18 publications (10 in Bulgarian and 8 in English) are available for review in this competition in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases and 19 in non-referenced Bulgarian journals or edited collective volumes.

Out of a total of 112 participations in Bulgarian and international forums, 67 are after her habilitation as an associate professor.

The total personal impact factor of Assoc. Prof. Pancheva is 27,710, of which 16,018 are after her habilitation as an associate professor.

The total number of citations after her habilitation as an associate professor is 137, all in foreign publications, referenced in world-famous databases.

From 2004 to the present, Assoc. Prof. Pancheva has participated in 4 research projects at the Medical University - Varna, in two projects at the Ministry of Education and Science and in 13 other national and European projects related to research groups and organizations.

3. Main contributions to scientific works

The contributions of the scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Pancheva can be grouped in the following main scientific directions:

- ✓ Nutritional status, nutritional and non-nutritional factors, care and quality of life of children with neuropsychiatric disorders
- ✓ Parental hesitation to vaccinate
- ✓ Recommendations for nutrition in chronic diseases beginning in childhood: cystic fibrosis, nutrition in chronic intestinal diseases, nutrition in type 1 diabetes mellitus with a long history and metabolic risk
- ✓ Preventive effect of nutrition: preventive effect of breast milk, prevention of allergies in childhood, gastro-oesophageal reflux in infancy
- ✓ Metabolic and nutritional risks in chronic conditions and diseases with long-term therapy: metabolic risks in patients after chemotherapy, eating and taste disorders in patients with chronic renal failure, nutritional deficiencies in patients with full dentures, non-alcoholic liver disease
- ✓ Probiotic effect

The scientific production of the candidate covers various areas of hygiene and preventive medicine. Borderline research areas of hygiene, pediatrics, immunoprophylaxis, etc. have been studied, which is an evidence of her interdisciplinary interests and good collaboration.

4. Teaching activity

The educational and teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Pancheva began in 2011 with the teaching of the discipline *Pediatrics* to medical students at the Faculty of Medicine. She currently teaches *Hygiene and Ecology* in Bulgarian and English to medical students at the Faculty of Medicine and to students from the Faculty of Public Health; the course *Environment and Health* of Masters in Public Health in Cyprus and Bulgaria; *Environment, Nutrition and Health* for Masters in Health Management; *Nutrition and Dietetics* for Masters of Rehabilitation, Wellness and Spa; Food safety for Masters in the program Safety and control of public health, and for the Medical College – Varna- the discipline *Hygiene of children and adolescents* for Bachelors in the specialty Public health inspectors.

The annual and teaching load during the last four academic years is between 250 and 280 hours, and her work includes hours for teaching lecture material and practical exercises.

She conducts training in individual courses for postgraduate qualification in *Breastfeeding Support, Characteristics of Autism, Early Childhood Intervention, Nutrition during the first 1000 days, Nutrition of children with type 1 diabetes* and others.

Under her supervision, two doctoral students have defended dissertations for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of PhD: Dr. Albena Toneva, who defended in 2020 and Dr. Stanislava Hadjieva, who defended in 2019. She is currently the research supervisor of four other doctoral students: Dr. Fatme Ahmed, Dr. Rositsa Stoycheva, Mirjana Atanasova and Dr. Miglena Marinova. She is the supervisor and reviewer of a series of diploma theses of masters in the specialty Safety and control of public health, Pharmaceutical Management and Care and Public Health.

She is a participant in a scientific jury of two candidates for associate professor and in the selection of four for chief assistant.

She is a reviewer of the scientific journals *Biomedical reviews, Scripta scientifica salutis publicae, Frontiers of Nutrition and metabolism, Varna Medical Forum, Scientific edition of the Union of Scientists - Varna branch, series Medicine and Ecology*.

5. Public and expert activity

Assoc. Prof. Pancheva successfully cooperates on various topics and projects of a number of institutions, public and non-governmental organizations such as the National Breastfeeding Support Association, the Municipality of Varna and others. She is a regular lecturer for the children's magazines *9 months* and the *Mother's Diary* and a preferred expert-interlocutor on the issues of proper nutrition from the educational programs of the *School for Parents* and the *Academy for Parents*. In addition, she is a correspondent and creator of lectures, videos and editor of films for educational sites: www.dechko.bg and www.namama.bg. As an expert at UNICEF, she has actively participated in the establishment of *Maternal and Child Health Centers* in the towns of Shumen and Sliven. She has been also organizer and participant in a series of nutrition conferences, summer schools at the European Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, sports marathon at MU-Varna, initiatives such as an annual meeting on the occasion of World Breastfeeding Week. She has been very active in introducing dietary nutrition in nurseries and kindergartens in Varna in 2013-2014 and has successfully cooperated with both educational institutions and public organizations involved in the problems of child nutrition.

She is a member of a number of scientific and professional organizations: Bulgarian Medical Union, Association of Cell Biology, Bulgarian Pediatric Association, Bulgarian Society of Enteral and Parenteral Nutrition, National Association "Breastfeeding Support, European Society of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism, European Society of Pediatrics, Hepatology and Nutrition, Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, Member of the Board of the Karin Dom Foundation and Deputy Chairman of the *Bulgarian Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition*.

Conclusion

The summarized analysis of the above aspects show that the scientometric indicators, professional qualification and social authority of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva - Dimitrova fully meet the requirements of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for

acquiring scientific degrees and holding an academic position *Professor* at the *Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov - Varna*.

Therefore, and due to my personal impressions of her academic erudition and professional collaborative character, I recommend to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to vote positively for the appointment of the candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva - Dimitrova, PhD the academic position *Professor* at the *Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov - Varna* for the needs of the Education Sector *Hygiene*, Department of *Hygiene and Epidemiology* at the Faculty of Public Health of the Medical University - Varna.

Varna, October 22, 2021

Signature: 

Prof. Dr. Valeria Ignatova Kaleva, MD