

SCIENTIFIC OPINION

by **Prof. Dr. Rumen Petrov Konstantinov MD, PhD**

Speciality "Epidemiology", Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Faculty of Public health, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna

Member of the Scientific Jury under Order No P-109-391/20.09.2021 of Prof. Dr. Valentin Ignatov, MD, PhD – Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna

Regarding: Announced competition for academic position "*Professor of Hygiene (incl. occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.)*"- Bulgarian- and English-speaking training, of the higher education area 7. Health and sports, professional direction 7.1. Medicine - one, for the needs of the Hygiene training sector, Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Faculty of Public health, at Medical University- Varna, announced in State Gazette issue No. 10/2014. 61/23.07.2021

In this competition, one candidate has submitted documents for participation - **Assoc. Prof. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova, MD, PhD**. The candidate has submitted the documents required under the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for Development of the Academic Staff of MU-Varna and they meet the necessary qualitative and quantitative criteria for the academic position "Professor".

I. Characteristics of the applicant's research and teaching activities.

1. Short biographical data and career development.

Assoc. prof. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova was born on 15.11.1972. in the town of Varna. She graduated from the First language school, profile English in 1991 and Medical University of Varna in 1997 with excellent grades. She started working as a clinical ordinator in pediatrics at St. Marina University hospital, Varna (1997-1998). She has consecutively worked at the Ailadynov Polyclinic (1999- 2002), "Vidya" Medical Center (2002-2004), and as a clinical ordinator at the General Clinic of Children's Diseases, University Hospital "St. Marina"(2007-2012). From 2013 till now she works as a pediatrician at St Stiliyan Medical centre- Varna. In the period 2012 -2014, she went through the academic positions – assistant and chief assistant at the Department of Hygiene, MU-Varna. In 2014 she was habilitated as an associate professor in the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology -MU-Varna.

Assoc. prof. Dr Pancheva-Dimitrova has specialities in Pediatrics and Nutrition and Dietetics. In 2008 she acquired a scientific and educational degree "Doctor" with the theme of the doctoral thesis "Probiotics in the prevention of dyspepsia in hospitalized children aged 0-7 years". Her language communication skills including English, German, Russian languages make it possible to perform a wide range of teaching, scientific, educational tasks and activities.

She has impressive ongoing active academic and applied development through participation in numerous courses and specializations on child nutrition and dietetics in renowned European clinical prevention centres: Vienna (1995), Keel (1996), Munster (1996), Bradford (1996), Munich (2007), Athens (2001), Dubrovnik (2012), Prague, Birmingham (2013), Boston (2016), Southampton (2017), Pediatric Gastroenterology Course-Salzburg, Austria (2019)), a series of 5 modular pieces of training in nutrition and dietetics in the National centre of NCPHP, Sofia and others. This rich list of training modules testifies to the creative growth of Associate professor Pancheva and the opportunity to apply the acquired scientific and practical potential for raising the

level of teaching and research at the Medical University - Varna.

2. Presented materials for the competition.

The list of scientific papers of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova includes 37 titles, of which 10 scientific publications equivalent to a habilitation thesis, published in publications that are referenced and indexed in world-famous databases for scientific information, as required by The Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of MU-Varna. Publications and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information - 8; Publications and reports published in unreferenced journals with a scientific review or published in edited collective volumes - 10; Full-text publications in scientific journals and collections outside the minimum scientific- and- metric requirements for acquiring the academic position "Professor" - 9; Citations, reflecting the scientific activity of the candidate - 37. (Academic reference for the publications, citations and scientific profiles of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova, MD, Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University-Varna prepared in the Library of MU-Varna). A total of 37 scientific publications subject to review and evaluation in this competition are presented after the competition for the academic position of associate professor (2014).

Assoc. Prof. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova, MD, PhD is the scientific supervisor of 2 successfully defended doctoral students (speciality "Hygiene") and 3 more in the process of developing dissertation topics; She participates in two international and one national scientific or educational project; she is also a member of the authors' team of 4 published university textbooks in hygiene and ecology for students speciality "Medicine". She actively participates in various forms of training of interns, postgraduates and doctoral students in "Nutrition and Dietetics", Continues medical education programs (initiator, organizer and lecturer) on breastfeeding support, characteristics of autism, diagnosis, therapeutic methods and approaches in childhood, early childhood intervention, organization and participation of two Eastern European schools at the European Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, guides 7 Master degree thesis.

According to the provided documents- official scientific, educational and teaching information, the candidate meets the necessary qualitative and quantitative criteria for holding the academic position of "professor" according to the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of MU-Varna.

3. Research activity

The scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova has been published in authoritative and peer-reviewed scientific journals - Vaccine, Hormone Research in Pediatrics, Frontiers in Pediatrics, Journal of IMAB, Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology, Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition, Clinical Nutrition and others, with an overall IF - 16.018, as well as in scientific journals, published in renowned Bulgarian editions and edited collective volumes - Medinfo, Practical Pediatrics, Proceedings of the Jubilee Scientific Conference with International Participation, 26-28.11. 2020, Faculty of Public Health, Pleven, Virtual Congress, Oct.16-19.2020, Fourth multifaceted conference on child development, 5-6 April 2019, Plovdiv: Med. University; 2020 and others.

Assoc. Prof. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova is the main or leading author in most of the presented publications and reports. She actively participates in the implementation of numerous international and national research projects on hygiene, nutrition and clinical problems of children

and infants with valuable applied results. The scientific activity is expressed in numerous participations as an author and speaker at 49 international and national scientific forums, where over 67 scientific reports in various scientific fields from the professional portfolio of the candidate have been presented.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova is the official supervisor of 2 doctoral students who defended dissertations and 3 in the process of developing dissertation topics in the field of hygiene, as well as 7 Master degree students who defended their postgraduate thesis. The professional and scientific competence and the ability to work with doctoral students and graduates allow active assistance and creation of conditions for academic and professional growth, participation in training and international forums, creation of appropriate conditions and opportunities for work and development. Proof of the successful scientific and educational process is the successful defence of dissertations and postgraduate thesis and the overall scientific and professional development of her colleagues.

4. Main contributions to scientific works:

The contributions of the scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova can be grouped in the following main scientific areas:

I. Nutritional status, nutritional and non-nutritional factors, care and quality of life of children with neuropsychiatric disorders

II. Parental hesitation to vaccinate

III. Nutrition recommendations for chronic diseases beginning in childhood

1. Cystic fibrosis (CF)

2. Nutrition in chronic intestinal diseases (CHD)

3. Nutrition in type 1 diabetes mellitus with a long history and metabolic risk

IV. Preventive effect of nutrition

1. Preventive effect of breast milk

2. Prevention of allergies in childhood

3. Gastro-oesophageal reflux in infancy - nutritional interventions

V. Metabolic and nutritional risks in chronic conditions and diseases with long-term therapy

1. Metabolic risks in patients after chemotherapy

2. Eating and taste disorders in patients with chronic renal failure

3. Nutritional deficiencies in patients with complete dentures

4. Non-alcoholic liver disease

VI. Probiotic effect

VII. Training of medical students in the field of hygiene and ecology

The scientific production of the candidate covers various areas of hygiene and preventive medicine. Multidisciplinary scientific fields of hygiene, pediatrics, immunoprophylaxis, etc. have been studied, which is evidence of the broad professional competence and scientific interests of the candidate and the results obtained have a definite contribution to medical science.

5. Assessment of the teaching activity of the candidate

Assoc. Prof. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova has a total of 10 years of teaching experience, of which over 7 years he is an associate professor at MU-Varna. The high professional qualification in "Nutrition and Dietetics" and "Pediatrics" and the broad scientific interests in the field of childhood are realized in the teaching of complex and specific subjects in the field of hygiene and ecology. She trains students, interns and graduates from the Faculty of Public Health, the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Dental Medicine, and the specialities from the Medical

College Varna, with an average workload in recent years over 274 teaching hours, which is over the standard of 180 hours of teaching (152% workload from the norm for study workload). The range of subjects in the teaching palette of assoc. prof. Pancheva includes Pediatrics-English Language Training 2011, Bachelors-Speech Therapy, Hygiene and Ecology - Bulgarian and English Language Training, Environment and Health-Masters, Masters Public Health-Cyprus and Bulgaria, Environment, nutrition and health - Masters in Health Management, Nutrition and dietetics - Masters, Rehabilitation, Wellness and spa, Food safety - Master's program in Safety and control of public health, Hygiene of children and adolescents- bachelors-Inspectors in public health, Breastfeeding support- elective course- Masters in medicine- Bulgarian and English speaking programs, Current problems of nutrition of healthy and sick people – facultative course for Masters of Medicine, Lecturer in Module 3 for specialists in Nutrition and Dietetics, Organizer and lecturer in the following CME training: Breastfeeding support, Characteristics of autism. Diagnosis, therapeutic methods and approaches in childhood; Early childhood intervention, face-to-face and e-learning modules, Nutrition during the first 1000 days - face-to-face and e-learning modules, Nutrition of children with type 1 diabetes mellitus.

In the implementation of the learning process, she appears as an erudite organizer and leader, skillfully applying modern methodology in the learning activity. She initiates and actively participates in the compilation of new curricula and the constant updating of existing curricula and tests for students of medicine, dentistry, health management, protection and control of public health and others.

Assoc. Prof. Ruzha Pancheva is an inspirer, organizer and participant in many public education programs and projects: Lecturer for the magazine "9 months" at the "School for parents" on the topic: "Breastfeeding - practical advice", "Academy for parents", Founder of the school on Breastfeeding in Varna at the National Association "Breastfeeding Support", Consultant of the Karin Dom Foundation in the field of early childhood development and early intervention, as well as work with children with special needs, Lecturer and correspondent for educational sites: [www.dechko .bg](http://www.dechko.bg) and www.namama.bg, Consultant for the creation of an educational film on "Puberty" funded by Glaxo Smith Kline, approved by the Ministry of Health as an educational film aimed at school age, Lecturer for UNICEF-Bulgaria on the project "Creation of centres for Maternal and Child Health "in Shumen and Sliven, Organizer and participant in a series of CME training, conferences on nutrition, the school for parents, sports marathon at MU-Varna, initiatives such as an annual meeting on the occasion of World Week of breastfeeding. Actively participates in all scientific, jubilee, creative events and performances, etc. organized by the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology at MU-Varna. She participates in numerous professional institutions and organizations - Member of the Bulgarian Medical Union, Member of the Association of Cell Biology, Member of the Bulgarian Pediatric Association, Member of the Bulgarian Society of Enteral and Parenteral Nutrition, Member of the National Breastfeeding Support Association, Member of the European Society of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism, Member of the European Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, Deputy Chairman of the Bulgarian Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, Member of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, Member of the Board of the Karin Dom Foundation.

II. Critical notes

I have no critical remarks about the candidate.

III. Personal impressions

Our joint work as members of the staff of the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology gives

me a reason to certify that Assoc. Prof. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova is an established lecturer, scientist and colleague with high professionalism, broad scientific interests, strong collegiality and organizational skills.

IV. Conclusion

Assoc. Prof. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova is a respected member of the academic community of the Medical University in Varna. She is an erudite specialist, an experienced teacher and a serious researcher with significant professional and pedagogical experience. The scientific, teaching and organizational work of Assoc. Prof. Ruzha Zlatanova Pancheva-Dimitrova fully meets the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of MU-Varna for academic promotion.

As a member of the Scientific Jury, I support her candidacy for the academic position of Professor of Hygiene (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.) at the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, PHC, Medical University - Varna and I will vote "FOR".

City of Varna
20.10.2021

MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY:


(Prof. Dr. Rumen Konstantinov, MD)