

STATEMENT OF OPINION

by **prof. dr. Valeriya Ignatova Kaleva, MD**

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Regarding: Competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in higher education field 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine and scientific specialty Pediatrics, for the needs of the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, MU - Varna, and the Clinic of Pediatric Clinical Hematology and Oncology at University Hospital St Marina - Varna (published in *State Gazette*, issue 17 on 26.02.202)

I. Normative Reason

In accordance with order # P-109-176/23.04.2021 r. of the Rector of Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”- Varna, I have been chosen as a member of the scientific jury for the open competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, published in *State Gazzette*, issue 17 on 26.02.2021. I have been informed that Dr. Milena Belcheva, MD, Assistant Professor at the Department of Pediatrics at Medical University - Varna is the only candidate for this position.

II. Professional and scientific biography of the candidate

Dr. Milena Belcheva obtained her degree in Medicine with honors from the High Medical Institute – Varna in 1985. In the same year, she started her professional career as a district pediatrician at the Children’s Polyclinic at the Regional Hospital in Shumen. In the period between 1986 and 1989, she served as a resident doctor at the Department of Pediatrics at the High Medical Institute-Varna. Following a competition for the position, she was appointed as an Assistant Professor at the same department and as a doctor at the Clinic of Pediatric Pulmonology at the University Hospital “Saint Marina” – Varna. Since 1993, she has held conjoint appointments as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Pediatrics and as a medical doctor in the Clinic of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology at University Hospital “Saint Marina” – Varna.

Dr. Belcheva holds diplomas in three medical specialties: *Pediatrics* (1991), *Oncology* (2004), and *Pediatric Hematology and Oncology* (2006). She specialized in *Pediatric oncology* at the Département de Pédiatrie, Institut Gustave-Roussy, Villejuif, Paris, France between 1998 and 2000, obtaining a diploma in *Pediatric Oncology* from the Institute.

In 2020, she successfully defended her dissertation “*Cardiac impairment, cardiometabolic risk and bone health among survivors of childhood haematological malignancies,*” and obtained the educational and scientific degree of *Doctor of Pediatrics*.

She is a member of the Bulgarian Pediatric Association, the Bulgarian Medical Society of Hematology, the Bulgarian Medical Society of Pediatric Oncology and Hematology, the European Society for Paediatric Oncology (SIOP Europe), and the Société Française de Lutte contre les Cancers et Leucémies de l'Enfant et de l'Adolescent (SFCE).

III. Normative Documentation for Participation in the Competition

The candidate has supplied all documents, necessary for participation in the competition: an autobiography, copies of her PhD diploma, copies of the diplomas certifying her medical specialties, both a list and copied of her scientific publications, both a list and evidence of participation in scientific congresses in Bulgaria and abroad, a list of articles that have cited her works, certified by the Medical University's Library, her impact factor, and an annotated bibliography of her publications' scientific contributions.

IV. Scientific Output relevant to the Competition

IV.A. Dissertation in fulfillment of the requirements for the educational and scientific degree of *Doctor of Pediatrics*: “*Cardiac impairment, cardiometabolic risk and bone health among survivors of childhood haematological malignancies,*” defended in 2020.

This dissertation is the first analysis of childhood survivors of acute lymphoblastic leukemia and Hodgkin's lymphoma of its kind in Bulgaria. It comprehensively examines the most common late side effects associated with the treatment of these two malignancies – cardiovascular pathology and bone health. It advances 18 hypotheses and 12 distinct theoretical and scientific contributions.

IV.B. Science-Metric Indices.

(1) Scientific Articles and Teaching Handbooks

Dr. Milena Belcheva participates in the competition with a total of 40 articles in scientific journals in Bulgaria and abroad and as a co-author of one clinical guide.

She has presented 10 full-text publications in Bulgarian and foreign journals, which have been peer-reviewed and indexed in world-class science databases. She also has published 7 articles in peer-reviewed and indexed journals (3 of them are full-text publications and 4 are abstracts published in foreign journals and compilations) and 14 articles in peer-reviewed, non-indexed journals. She has 9 full-text publications in scientific journals and compilations in excess of the minimum requirements for the position of Associate Professor. Dr. Belcheva has 7 single-authored publications, 16 first-author publications, 10 second-author publications, and 10 other co-authored publications.

(2) Citations and Impact Factor

According to the documents supplied by the Medical Library at the Medical University – Varna, Dr. Belcheva has 15 citations in foreign journals, which sum up to 210 points. The impact factor of the journals the candidate has published in is 18.48.

V. Scientific Contributions

The candidates' scientific contributions span several areas: (1) late effects of the treatment of childhood malignancies and follow-up on patients in long-term remission; (2) solid childhood tumors; (3) childhood malignant hemopathy; (4) oncologic emergencies and complications in children and their treatment; and (5) benign hematological diseases.

Dr. Milena Belcheva's scientific contributions to the Bulgarian pediatric oncohematology focus on pressing concerns and are methodologically innovative, analytically interpretative, and clinically applicable.

VI. Teaching Experience

Dr. Milena Belcheva has more than 29 years of experience teaching students of medicine as an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics. She is the instructor on record of the elective *Pediatrics* and faculty in graduate qualifying specialty *Pediatric Oncohematology*. Her mean teaching load over the past 3 years has been 214, 222, and 248 h/y, greatly surpassing the standard load of 126 h/y.

VII. Clinical Experience

By June 17, 2021, Dr. Milena Belcheva had accumulated more than 36 years of experience as a medical doctor. She spent 1 year as a district pediatrician, three years as a resident doctor, one year as a medical doctor at the Clinic of Pediatric Pulmonology, two years as a resident at the Département de Pédiatrie, Institut Gustave-Roussy, Villejuif, Paris, France, and 29 years at the Clinic of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology at the University Hospital «Saint Maria» - Varna.

VIII. Conclusions

Based on her significant scientific contributions to the pediatric oncohematological sciences in Bulgaria, her strong academic record, and her clinical expertise, I recommend that the esteemed scientific jury award the position of Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”- Varna to Dr. Milena Ivanova Belcheva.

June 17, 2021

Varna



Prof. Dr. Valeriya Kaleva, MD