

TO  
THE CHAIR OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY  
APPOINTED BY ORDER № P-109-166

## OPINION

from  
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stefan Tsvetanov Tsekov, MD, PhD  
Professional field of Medicine 7.1, Medical College - Varna at the  
Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov" - Varna

**Subject:** competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Ophthalmology, field of higher education (7) "Health and Sports". A half-time position, for the needs of the Training Sector "Medical Optician" at the Medical College - Varna and half-time position for "SBOBAL - Varna", announced in SG no. 14 / 18.02.2022.

By order №R-109-166 of the Rector of Medical University - Varna and protocol №44 / 30.03.2022 of the Academic Council of Medical University (MU) - Varna I was appointed a member of the scientific jury. With minutes № 1 / 29.04.2022 from the meeting of the scientific jury I was elected to prepare an opinion.

In preparing the opinion, I have complied with all legal and regulatory requirements of the Republic of Bulgaria.

One candidate participates in the announced competition - Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Dimitar Ivanov Grupchev, MD, PhD. The candidate has submitted all necessary documents for participation in the competition, in accordance with the law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of the Medical University - Varna.

### **Brief on career development**

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Dimitar Ivanov Grupchev, MD, PhD has obtained a master's degree in Medicine at the Medical University - Varna in 2016 (diploma № 003798 / 04.10.2016). In the same year he began his career as a resident in ophthalmology at the Department of "Eye Diseases and Visual Sciences" at MU-Varna. After winning a competition, on March 1, 2018 Dr. Grupchev was appointed as an assistant at the Medical College - Varna, training sector "medical optician", and on September 15, 2018 he was appointed head of the same sector. After completing the requirements, from 01.06.2021 he took the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor at the same unit of Medical University-Varna.

In 2017, Dr. Grupchev was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences of MU-Varna in the program "Ophthalmology". His thesis "Cellular and tissue therapy of anterior ocular surface" was successfully defended in 2021, and he was awarded the scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)" (diploma № 426 /

20.05.2021). In 2021 Dr. Grupchev acquired the specialty "Eye Diseases" (diploma № 4541 / 12.02.2021).

Dr. Grupchev is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Union, the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Society of Ophthalmology. He is also a member by examination of the European Board of Ophthalmology (EBO). He is also member of the European Cataract and Refractive Surgery Association (ESCRS) and the European Retina Association (EuRetina). For the period 2017-2021 he was also a member of the Association for research and vision in ophthalmology (ARVO).

### **Clinical and scientific development of the candidate**

Dr. Grupchev's clinical interests are in the field of complex optical correction and plastic procedures, vitreoretinal surgery, including its clinical and social aspects, modification of corneal healing and corneal regeneration, amniotic membrane and its application in ophthalmology, transplantation cornea and stem cells and eye tissue "banking". They fully covered by his research and include a wide range of current medical and socially significant issues in the field of ophthalmology.

The publications and references attached for participation in the competition are prove for high scientific productivity of the candidate. For the participation in the competition the publishing activity of Dr. Grupchev is distributed according to the minimum metric requirements of MU-Varna as follows:

- Dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "PhD", presented also with an abstract in English - 1;
- Habilitation thesis – monograph, presented also with an abstract in English – 1;
- Publications – for the purpose of the competition total 21, of which:
  - 5 - published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-recognised databases ;
  - 13 - published in other journals/volumes with scientific review;
  - 3 - outside the minimum scientometric requirements;
  - Published university textbook – 1.

Dr. Grupchev presented a list for participation in 18 scientific forums Bulgarian and international forums with total of 8 presentations and 4 posters(national) and 5 presentations and 6 posters (international). He has participated in 6 research projects, two of which are socially significant for the region: The Glaucoma Project and The Children's Vision Project at the Municipality of Varna.

Although relatively Dr. Grupchev has h-index = 3, data base citations with a total of 34 and a total impact factor of journals where he published (IF) = 23.489.

In 2020, he is preparing a seminar on vitreal surgery, including live surgery. In the same year, Dr. Grupchev joined ESCRS training for young ophthalmologists and ophthalmology seminars in Salzburg, Austria. Candidate also participated in training for macular hole surgery in Munich, Germany.

In summary, according to the presented by Dr. Grupchev minimum required points for academic position "Associate Professor ", supported by relevant evidence of compliance, it can be determined that it covers metric indicators for the above mentioned academic post according to current regulations of MU-Varna. The compliance with the metric requirements is provided in the following table:

Requirements by group	Required points	Achieved points by candidate based on evidence
A	50	50
Б	-	-
B	100	100
Г	200 (≥60p. position Г 7)	205,75 (87p. position Г 7)
Д	50	75

The scientific interests and contributions demonstrated by Dr. Grupchev are of high practical value and clinical verification, thanks to his intensive work not only as a lecturer but also as a specialist in "Eye Diseases" with a strong interest in surgery.

#### **Evaluation of the teaching activity of the candidate**

The study load of Dr. Grupchev for the period 2016-2021 is related to the following disciplines: "Eye Diseases" specialties "Medicine" and "Nursing". His other disciplines include: "Contact Lenses", "Ophthalmic Optics", "Optics and optical devices ", " TOP ", and final supervision of "Medical Opticians " in their course work.

Its study load for the 2020/2021 academic year is a total of 382 hours, of which 6 hours of lectures, 279 hours of exercises are in Bulgarian and 97 hours in English.

As the head of the educational sector and as a university lecturer with teaching experience over 5 years, Dr. Grupchev applies excellent managerial skills, successfully introduces the methods of digital learning while using his clinical experience in optimizing the work of medical professionals, opticians and optometrists in the fields of ophthalmology, optometry and medical optics. He has created a training program in the specialty "Medical Optician" and actively works with students from various specialties and graduates interested in eye diseases and visual sciences. It is important to emphasize the contribution of Dr. Grupchev as a teacher through his participation as a co-author in a textbook on ophthalmology, designed to educate students in medicine and dentistry.


#### **Conclusion**

Chief Assistant Dr. Dimitar Ivanov Grupchev, MD fully meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its

implementation and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of the Medical University - Varna to hold the academic position "Associate Professor".

The information provided in the reports on the teaching, research and clinical activities of Dr. Grupchev are supported by precisely presented, detailed evidence. The presented scientific achievements, his qualification and his professional development both in the teaching and in the clinical work give grounds for a definite positive opinion and proposal to the members of the scientific jury to elect Dr. Dimitar Grupchev, MD, PhD as "Associate Professor" in the field "Eye Diseases", higher education (7) "Health and Sports", half-time position, for the needs of the Training Sector "Medical Optician" at the Medical College - Varna and half-time position as a ophthalmic surgeon for "SBOBAL - Varna".

23 May 2022  
Varna

  
Member of the scientific jury  
Assoc. Dr. Stefan Tsekov, MD, PhD