

**TO  
THE SCIENTIFIC JURY**

## **OPINION**

by

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**Subject:** Competition for holding the academic position of '**Associate Professor**' in the specialty '**Ophthalmology**', field of higher education 7. 'Healthcare and Sports', **one**, 05 full-time position, for the needs of Training Sector 'Medical Optician' at the Medical College – Varna and 0,5 full-time position in the clinical base, announced in State Gazette No. 14 / 18.02.2022

By Order No. R-109-166 / 14.04.2022 of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna and Minutes No. 44 / 30.03.2022 of the Academic Council of the Medical University of Varna, I have been appointed a member of the Scientific Jury. With Minutes No. 1 / 29.04.2022 from the meeting of the Scientific Jury, I have been elected to prepare an opinion.

One candidate is participating in the announced competition – Chief Assistant Dr. Dimitar Ivanov Grupchev, MD, FEBO (Fellow of the European Board of Ophthalmology).

The candidate has submitted the documents required for participation in the competition, and I have made an assessment based on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations governing its implementation and the Regulations for Academic Staff Development of Medical University – Varna.

### **Brief data of the professional development of the candidate**

Chief Assistant Dr. Dimitar I. Grupchev, MD, FEBO, graduated 'Medicine' at the Medical University of Varna in 2016 and obtained a Master's Degree (Diploma No. 003798 / 04.10.2016). In the same year, he continued his education with a second Master's Degree in 'Healthcare Management'. Parallel with this, he started his career development as a junior doctor undergoing training in 'Ophthalmology' at the Specialized Hospital for Active Treatment in Ophthalmology - Varna. After winning a competition, on March 1, 2018 D-r Grupchev was appointed as an Assistant in the Training Sector 'Medical Optician' at the Medical College - Varna, and on September 15, 2018 he was appointed as Head of such Training Sector. From June 1, 2021, after defending his doctoral dissertation in the professional field of medicine, he also held the academic position of Chief Assistant in such Training Sector.

In 2017, Dr. Grupchev was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the Medical University of Varna in the doctoral program 'Ophthalmology' with the dissertation topic 'Cellular and Tissue Therapy of the Anterior Ocular Surface'. In 2021, he was awarded the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (Diploma No. 426 / 20.05.2021).

In 2020, Dr. Grupchev acquired the specialty 'Eye Diseases' and the right to practice as a specialist from January 2021. The same year he took two extremely prestigious exams, key to the career of every European ophthalmologist – EBO and ICO.

Dr. Grupchev is member of the Bulgarian Medical Association, the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Society of Ophthalmology. He is also a member of the **European Board of Ophthalmology (EBO)**, the European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons (**ESCRS**) and the European Society of Retina Specialists (**EuRetina**). During the period of his work as a doctoral student, he was a member of the prestigious eye and vision research organization - **Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)**.

### **Evaluation of the clinical and clinical-applied work of the candidate**

The clinical interests of Dr. Grupchev are diverse, but most impressive is his interest in vitreoretinal surgery. Other interesting highlights in the candidate's clinical work are the complex optical correction and plastic procedures, the modification of corneal healing and the corneal regeneration. The candidate has dedicated a significant part of his clinical and applied work to the amniotic membrane and its application in ophthalmology, the corneal and stem cell transplantation and the creation of eye tissue bank. It is no coincidence that his clinical skills are highly valued nationally and internationally.

### **Evaluation of the scientific work and publications of the candidate**

The attached evidence for participation in scientific forums is a confirmation of the candidate's activity and desire for development. Dr. Grupchev has indicated participation in 18 scientific forums in Bulgaria and abroad and has specified 8 presentations and 4 posters of national meetings and congresses, 5 presentations and 6 posters at international meetings and congresses and 2 online presentations. He has also participated in 6 research projects. In 2020, Dr. Grupchev was involved in training for young ophthalmologists at ESCRS and ophthalmology seminars in Salzburg – Austria, as well as training in macular hole surgery training for young ophthalmologists in Munich, Germany. In 2021, he prepared a seminar on vitreal surgery, including live surgery.

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

- Dissertation paper for awarding the educational and scientific degree 'Doctor';
- Monograph (which I consider unique for Bulgaria);
- Publications – submitted a total of 21 publications, of which:

- 5 – published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in the Web of Science/Scopus;
- 13 – published in journals with scientific review outside the specified databases, but present in Google 'Science';
- 3 – outside the minimum scientometric requirements;
- Published university textbook, in which he has participation in several chapters.

According to a reference from the library of the Medical University of Varna, the candidate has h-index = 3, and an impact factor based on the journals in which he has published (IF) = 23.489.

The candidate covers the 'Minimum required points by groups of indicators for the academic position of 'associate professor', supported by the relevant evidence. Compliance with the scientometric requirements of the Medical University of Varna for the academic position of 'Associate Professor' is provided in the following table:

<b>Groups of indicators</b>	<b>Required number of points</b>	<b>Number of points based on the evidence submitted by the candidate</b>
A	50	50
B	-	-
C	100	100
D	200 (≥ 60 points of indicator D 7)	205,75 (87 points of indicator D 7)
E	50	75

The young colleague Dr. Grupchev has really excellent indicators and active research, but his academic work is no less impressive.

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

The candidate works at the Medical College of Varna, managing the Training Sector 'Medical Optician'. It can be seen from the provided information that he is involved in other units, leading exercises in the following disciplines: 'Eye Diseases' of students majoring in 'Medicine' and majoring in 'Nurse', 'Contact Lenses', 'Ophthalmic Optics', 'Optics and Optical Instruments', 'Optical Production Technology', as well as internships for students majoring in 'Medical Optics'. According to the information provided, the candidate regularly exceeds the

required 220 hours per year. For example, for the last completed school year of 2020/2021, his total teaching hour load was 382 hours, of which 97 hours of exercises in English.

I know the candidate personally and he has always impressed me with his good manners and collegial attitude. An extremely interesting young man with diverse knowledge outside the field of medicine. He is fluent in English, French and Russian languages. He is very compassionate to patients and always willing to help.

### Conclusion

The products and evidence presented by Chief Assistant Dr. Dimitar Ivanov Grupchev, MD, FEBO, fully meets the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations governing its implementation and the Regulations for Academic Staff Development of the Medical University - Varna. The candidate undoubtedly meets the scientometric requirements for holding the academic position of 'Associate Professor'.

I would like to recommend to the Honorable Scientific Jury to vote positively for Chief Assistant Dr. Dimitar Ivanov Grupchev, MD, FEBO, to be elected to the academic position of 'Associate Professor' in the specialty '**Eye Diseases**'. I believe that the candidate's career development will be important not only for his success, but also for the development of Ophthalmology in Bulgaria.

23.05.2022

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Sofia city

Member of the Scientific Jury:

/Prof. Dr. Tsvetomir Ivanov Dimitrov, D.M.Sc./

