

## OPINION

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Member of the Scientific Jury for the procedure announced for the needs of the Department of General Medicine, Faculty of Medicine at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov"  
- Varna

**Subject:** Procedure for the appointment to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional direction 7.1 Medicine, in the specialty "General Medicine" at the Faculty of Medicine, Department of General Medicine, and the Rheumatology Clinic at University Hospital "St. Marina" - Varna, announced in the State Gazette, issue 45/28.05.2024.

According to Order No. R-109-227/26.07.2024 of the Rector of MU - Varna and Protocol No. 24/08.07.2024 from a meeting of the Faculty Council of Medicine, I was appointed to prepare an opinion regarding the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at MU - Varna for the needs of the Department of General Medicine.

This opinion has been developed and presented in accordance with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for the conditions and procedures for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at MU - Varna.

One candidate has applied for the competition: Chief Assistant Dr. Svetlana Hristova Hristova, Ph.D. in Medicine.

### 1. Brief Biographical Data of the Candidate

Dr. Svetlana Hristova Hristova, Ph.D., was born in 1974 in the town of Shumen, where she graduated from the Natural Science and Mathematics High School "Nancho Popovich." She graduated as a Master of Medicine from MU – Varna in 1998. She has acquired three specialties: Internal Medicine (2007), Rheumatology (2011), and General Medicine (2018).

Dr. Svetlana Hristova began her career as a physician at the Emergency Medical Service in Varna, where she worked for seven years. Since 2005, she has been an assistant at the Department of General Medicine and Clinical Laboratory. Since 2010, she has also worked as a physician at the Rheumatology Clinic at University Hospital "St. Marina" EAD.

Dr. Svetlana Hristova has completed two training courses on good medical practice from the Institute of Clinical Research in the UK.

Between 2016 and 2019, she was a full-time Ph.D. student at the Department of General Medicine at MU Varna, and in 2019, she defended her thesis titled "Predictors and Prognostic Indices for the Clinical Course and Effect of Treatment in Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis," obtaining a Ph.D. degree in General Medicine.

Dr. Svetlana Hristova has participated in various qualification courses, postgraduate training, and scientific forums both in Bulgaria and abroad, in the fields of General Medicine and Rheumatology.

Dr. Hristova speaks Russian and English fluently, possesses excellent computer skills, and has strong communication skills and the ability to work effectively in a team.

She is a member of EURACT (European Academy of Teachers in Family Medicine), the Association of General Practitioners in Bulgaria (SOGPB), the Bulgarian Society of Rheumatology, and the Bulgarian Medical Association.

### 2. General Description of the Materials Presented in the Competition

The materials presented for the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the specialty "General Medicine" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional direction 7.1 Medicine, meet the requirements of the LDASRB, its Regulations, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University – Varna.

The scientific activity of Dr. Svetlana Hristova, Ph.D., is evaluated based on actual publications.

Dr. Svetlana Hristova, Ph.D., has presented 27 scientific works. Of these, 24 scientific papers are

included as evidence in the report on meeting the minimum requirements for the position of "Associate Professor" according to the LDASRB from 2018. Additionally, one publication is presented outside the evidence for fulfilling the minimum requirements for the position of "Associate Professor."

Their distribution from a scientometric perspective is as follows:

- Dissertation – 1;
- Habilitation work (monograph) – 1;  
Full-text articles: 25, of which
- In peer-reviewed and indexed scientific journals in globally recognized databases: 6;
- In non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review: 19.

The quantitative analysis of the scientific publications of Chief Assistant Dr. Svetlana Hristova, Ph.D., shows that they meet the national scientometric criteria for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional direction 7.1 Medicine.

### **3. Qualitative Characteristics of the Scientific Activity**

The research work and main scientific contributions of Dr. Svetlana Hristova, Ph.D., are focused on the following four main areas:

1. Childhood obesity as a problem in general medical practice - a patient-oriented approach
2. Patients with rheumatological diseases in General Medical Practice - diagnostic and therapeutic challenges
3. Health promotion activities in General Medical Practice
4. Communication skills and approaches when dealing with people with various chronic diseases, different ethnicities, disabilities, and palliative care in General Medical Practice

The scientific publications in area 1 address a problem that affects a significant portion of the population, regardless of age. Childhood obesity is a major health and social issue that has reached large-scale proportions in recent years.

The rheumatic diseases discussed in some of the publications are common problems that general practitioners encounter. Their role in relation to patients with rheumatic complaints involves prevention, early diagnosis, and timely referral to a specialist. Dr. Svetlana Hristova's dissertation, "Predictors and Prognostic Indices for the Clinical Course and Effect of Treatment in Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis," holds great practical significance as it explores innovative methods for diagnosing and monitoring the treatment of a socially significant disease. The scientific publications in area 3 reflect the interest in establishing the opportunities for general practitioners to carry out health promotion and disease prevention activities, which are essential factors in public health, especially in the fight against chronic non-communicable diseases, supporting the health of healthy individuals, screening, and early diagnosis of neoplasms and socially significant diseases.

With the growing number of patients suffering from chronic diseases, as well as those in the terminal stages of illness, the demand for palliative care increases. These issues are discussed in the publications in area 4.

### **4. Evaluation of the Monograph Submitted for the Competition for "Associate Professor"**

Dr. Svetlana Hristova's monograph, titled "Personalized Medicine in General Practice," focuses on an innovative approach to patient care. Personalized medicine is based on the principle that each patient is unique and requires an individualized approach to their treatment. It includes the analysis of genetic and molecular characteristics, as well as environmental factors that may affect the disease and the patient's response to treatment. The monograph presents personalized medicine as an approach that has the potential to change the way diseases are diagnosed and treated.

### **5. Citations of the Candidate's Publications in National Literature**

An academic report, prepared by the Library of MU - Varna, based on information provided by the author and automated information from international scientific databases (Google Scholar,



Research Gate, ORCID, Researcher ID, and eLibrary), has been presented in the competition documents. The report lists citations in scientific publications that are referenced and indexed in internationally recognized databases (2 citations) and in non-referenced journals with scientific review (4 citations), with a total of 6 citations.

## 6. Conclusion

According to the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University – Varna, the scientific and publication activity presented fully meets the minimum scientometric requirements for the position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional direction 7.1 Medicine.

The scientific works submitted by the candidate for the competition demonstrate significant theoretical and practical contributions. The research activity presents notable achievements in science and practice.

Based on the analysis of the overall scientific and teaching activity and its compliance with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, I have grounds to vote "Positive" and recommend that the esteemed jury confer the academic position of "Associate Professor" to Dr. Svetlana Hristova, Ph.D., in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional direction 7.1 Medicine, in the scientific specialty "General Medicine" for the needs of the Department of General Medicine.

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