

Statement of Opinion

By Prof. D-r Juliana Krumova Marinova, PhD

Member of the Scientific Jury, determined by Order No. R-109-97, Varna, 22.03.2024 by Prof. Dr. Dimitar Raykov, PhD, DSc - Rector of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna

Regarding: announced in the State Gazette, issue 07/23.01.2024, a competition for the academic position "Professor" in the specialty "Social Medicine and Organization of Health Care and Pharmacy" (in Bg and Eng. language), professional direction 7.1. Medicine, field of higher education 7. Health care and sports – one position for the needs of the Department of "Social Medicine and Healthcare Organization", Faculty of "Public Health", with additional requirements for the candidates: Master degree in medicine and PhD in "Social Medicine and Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy"

Candidate: Assoc. Prof. Desislava Ivanova Vankova, MD, MPH, PhD, DSc

According to Protocol No. 1/2.04.2024 of the first meeting of the Scientific jury, I am appointed to present a statement of opinion. The opinion was prepared based on an analysis of the documents submitted by the candidate (presented in 23 points in the Application to the Rector) in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Medical University "Prof. . Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

CAREER PROFILE OF THE CANDIDATE

Desislava Ivanova Vankova was born in 1968 in Burgas. She graduated with full honors and a gold medal from the English Language High School "Geo Milev", Burgas in 1989. She graduated as a "Master" in Medicine, Medical University - Varna in 1993. She began her professional career as a physician in the Internal Medicine Department (1995-1996) - Municipal Hospital - Malko Tarnovo, Burgas region and successively: physician (1995-1996) - Health Service of Avren Municipality, Varna region; physician in social medicine (1996-1997) and epidemiologist (1997-2001) in the Hygiene and Epidemiological Inspection - Varna; key account manager in GlaxoSmithKline-Bulgaria (2001-2015).

She was engaged as a part-time assistant (1999-2003; 2015-2016) at the Medical University – Varna (MU – Varna), and since 2016 she has been a chief assistant and currently an Associate professor (since 2018) at the Department of Social Medicine and Healthcare Organization, MU - Varna.

In the postgraduate system for specialization, she has a recognized specialty in "Social Medicine and Healthcare Organization" since 2001. Since 1999, she is a Master of Public Health from Maastricht University, the Netherlands.

Assoc. Prof. Dr Vankova holds an educational and scientific degree "PhD" in the scientific specialty "Social medicine and organization of healthcare and pharmacy" since 2013 with a successfully defended dissertation on the topic: "*Health-related Quality of life in the community*" at the Medical University of Varna, as well as the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" from 2022 - on the topic "*Integrative medicine- holistic conceptual model, scientific and educational approaches*".

Assoc. Prof. Dr Vankova has numerous additional qualifications and has participated in national and international research projects in the country and abroad.

Excellent written and spoken English (C2 level), Russian (C2 level) and French (A1 level) foreign languages.

Summary: The presented information confirms that Desislava Vankova has a high qualification, extensive experience and skills, an expression of purposeful and consistent professional development.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

1. Quantitative presentation:

Scientometric academic requirements for occupying the academic position "Professor", field 7. Health and sports: From the presented Academic report, issued by the Library of the MU - Varna according the groups of indicators:

- Scientific publication covering the minimum academic requirements:

Indicator A 1 – Dissertation work for acquiring the “PhD” degree – 50 points;

Indicator B 3 – Habilitation work – monograph -1- 100 points.

Indicator G5. Published monograph, which is not presented as the main habilitation thesis - 1 - 100 points.

Indicator G6. A published book based on a defended dissertation work for the awarding of "Doctor of Sciences" degree - 1 - 40 points.

Indicator G7. Publications and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information: 15 publications - 428.57 points with a required minimum of 100 points.

Indicator G8. Publications and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes: 34 publication – 773 points.

Indicator G9. Published chapter in a collective monograph - 1 – 15 points.

For Indicators G5–9: the equivalent number of points is 1356.57 points with a mandatory minimum of 200 points.

- Citations reflecting the scientific activity of the candidate:

Indicator D10. Citations or reviews in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes - 42 citations;

Indicator D11. Citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes – 15 citations;

Indicator D12 Citations or reviews in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals – 78 citations;

For Indicators D10-12: in total of 135 citations - 1140 points.

The list of citations covering the minimum requirements for holding the academic position "professor" contains citations of 46 publications of Assoc. Prof. Vankova – 830 points.

Indicators E13 – E22 are with total number of 595 points; E13 Doctor of Science dissertation; E20 & E21 – textbooks and handbooks - 5 in numbers; – fulfilled

requirements according indicator E14 – supervised PhD students (successfully defended).

- In the current competition, Assoc. Prof. Vankova also presents 6 full-text publications in scientific journals and anthologies, beyond the minimum scientometric requirements for occupying the position of "Professor".
- IF information: **Impact factor** of the journals in which the candidate has publications - full text and abstracts - contains 6 titles with a total impact factor of the journals - 14.715.
- **Authorship** of the presented scientific works: Desislava Vankova is an independent author and first author in 47% of the scientific works evaluated in the competition, which confirms her personal contribution to their development.

Summary: Assoc. Prof. Vankova completely covers and significantly exceeds the academic requirements for occupying the academic position "Professor" - minimum and additional requirements.

2. Research areas and scientific contributions:

The research activity of Desislava Vankova is in the subject area of the competition. The distribution of the presented scientific works by priority thematic areas and her research activities are as follows:

1) **QUALITY OF LIFE AND HEALTH. SOCIAL INEQUALITIES:** 24 scientific papers presented in two subsections:

- *In public health – for the various vulnerable groups of the population – adults, children, etc.; № of publications from the attached academic reference: A1, G5; G7-10; G8-7; G8-14; G8-20; G8-24; G8-26; G8-28; G8-30; G8-32; G9; E-18(2);*
- *In medicine – patient-reported outcomes in chronic diseases in the context of person-oriented comprehensive patient care: of publications from the attached academic reference: A1; G5; G8-12; G8-24; G8-26; E14; E16 (2); E-17(2; 3); № 52 in the Resumes; № 16 in the Resumes;*

2) **HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE:** 42 scientific papers presented in three subsections:

- *Health promotion; active aging; values and development of public health care; № of publications from the attached academic reference: A1; B3; F5; F7-2; F8-3; F8-9; F8-14; F8-20; F8-21; F8-25; F8-27; F8-28; F8-29; F8-30; F8-31; F9; E13; E14; E16 (1); № 53 in the Resumes;*
- *Health promotion through Bulgarian folk dances as a physical activity and academic discipline; № of publications from the attached academic reference: A1; B3; F5; F7-2; F8-3; F8-9; F8-14; F8-20; F8-21; F8-25; F8-27; F8-28; F8-29; F8-30; F8-31; F9; E13; E14; E16 (1); № 53 in the Resumes;*
- *One Health – expert research work at an international level and introduction of the idea in Bulgarian context, including in routine activities for control of infections-*

IPC, as well as for monitoring antimicrobial resistance: № of publications from the attached academic reference: G7-3; G7-4; G7-5; G8-2; G8-4; G8-6; G8-10; G8-15; E14; E-17(1); E-19(1); E-19(2); № 6 in the IF information;

3) INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE - CONCEPTUAL MODELING AND RESEARCH IN COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE (CAM) AND HEALTH PROMOTION: 24 research articles : B3; Г5 (art therapy part); G6; G7-1; G7-7; G7-8; G8-1; G8-3; G8-11; G8-13; G8-14 (in the part learning foreign languages for dementia prevention); G8-16; G8-17; G8-18; G8-19; G8-22; E13; E14; E16 (3); E-18(3); E-19(2); E-21 (3); № 50 in the Resumes; № 5 & 2 in the IF Information;

4) EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. METHODOLOGY AND APPLICATIONS: 17 research papers, presented in two subsections:

- *Public health training and educational methods; № of publications from the attached academic reference: G5; G7-1; G7-6; G7-11; G7-13; G8-1; G8-5; G8-8; G8-13; G8-23; G8-31; G8-32; E-20; E-21;*
- *Methodology of the research, scientometrics and open access in medical science: № of publications from the attached academic reference G7-6; G8-19; № 54 in the Resumes.*

The candidate in the competition presents the contributions of his scientific research activity consistently and thoroughly in the author's reference for the contributions, developed on 18 pages. For each of the directions and its subsections, the contributions have a theoretical, methodological and applied nature. Given the limited volume of the current state of opinion, I allow myself to present a synthesis in this regard.

- Desislava Vankova is a researcher of theoretical problems in unpopular and innovative areas of the modern social medicine - health-related quality of life, represented by studies from 2010 to the present; mixed-method approaches in medicine; integrative medicine, in which field is the habilitation thesis presented in the competition "*Integrative medicine-holistic conceptual model, scientific and educational approaches*"; One Health, Narrative medicine;
- The classical approaches of preventive medicine and health promotion remain at the "core value" of her scientific works, including targeting vulnerable groups: the elderly and children;
- The research field of „History of medicine“ is included in all the priority directions of her research priorities;
- In her work, Desislava Vankova applies methods and approaches from the humanitarian, social and natural sciences, working in multidisciplinary teams. In this way, she is a representative of the "third generation" of academic researchers of the XXI century, oriented towards "integrative sciences" as a leading idea for modern times.

Summary: The contributions of Desislava Vankova's scientific works can be presented as innovative in a methodological and practical-applied context, defining her research profile as a thorough and conscientious researcher-innovator.

3. Research and scientific projects, PhD students, specialty supervisions:

Desislava Vankova participates in **15 research and educational national and international projects**, in 6 of which she is a project leader: *„One Health – integrative research and scientometric approaches for better quality of life“, project № 22007, funded by Fund „Nauka“, MU-Varna, 2022 – to the present; „Early Childhood Development – Determinant of Health and Quality of Life“ (project leader, 2019-2023, funded by Fund „Nauka“, MU-Varna); „Scientific approaches to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) – concept, context, quality of life“, project leader, Fund „Nauka“, MU-Varna (2020 - 2022); „Influence of Bulgarian folk dances on the health and quality of life of the students at the Medical University - Varna“ project leader, Fund „Nauka“, MU-Varna (2018 - 2020); Network T&CM alternatives for antibiotics worldwide: Global Initiative for Traditional Solutions to Antimicrobial Resistance (GIFTS-AMR), Representative for Bulgaria, Chair of a working group, The Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance (2020-2023); Team Leader, conducting the Regional Strategy on HIV and STD, UNAIDS project and the Ministry of Health in 2000.*

Desislava Vankova is the **scientific supervisor** of 2 PhD students who successfully obtained their PhD degrees, currently supervises 3 PhD students, as well as provides scientific supervision of specialists and last year medical students.

She is a member of the **Editorial Board** of the scientific journal of “Asclepius”-International Annual for History and Philosophy of Medicine, published by the Balkan Association of History and Philosophy of Medicine.

She is a **reviewer in the following peer reviewed journals**: BMC Public Health, Value in Health Regional Issues, Scripta Scientifica Salutis Publicae, Zdrowie Publiczne i Zarządzanie, Social Medicine, Bulgarian Journal of Public Health, Journal of IMAB, Asclepius, Journal of the Union of Scientists-Varna, Medical Review and others.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

Desislava Vankova has extensive teaching experience in the Department of Social Medicine and Healthcare Organization. From the presented **"Study Load Report"** for the last 4 academic years, it is clear that she completed between 318 and 391 hours per academic year. The candidate in the competition is the author and co-author of 5 textbooks and handbooks. Leads lecture courses in social medicine, with emphasis on the relevant specialty, for students in: medicine (English language course); nurses, midwives, to speech therapists, kinesi therapists and optometrists, healthcare management and others. She also conducts seminars for medical students (Bulgarian and English language course), dentistry (Bulgarian and English language course, until 2019), pharmacists and assistant pharmacists. In 2023 - 2024, she participated in the innovative Master's programs Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare and Artificial Intelligence in Biomedicine through the development of the study discipline "Preventive care, Health Promotion and Artificial Intelligence and participation in the Research Methods discipline.

Memberships in **scientific and professional** bodies: European Public Health Association (EUPHA); Bulgarian Medical Association; NGO „Public Health-99“; Bulgarian Public Health Association (Board Member since 2023); Bulgarian Scientific Society of Public

Health (BSSPH); Union of Scientists, Varna branch, section Medicine; European Society of Integrative Medicine.

Desislava Vankova has significant **expert** activity: Member of the Ethics Committee at the "St. Marina" University Hospital, Varna - from November 2018 to May 2022; Member of the Research Ethics Committee at the Medical University of Varna - from October 2020 to the present; Member of the EUPHA Working Group on Access to Medicines - from July, 2023; Expert at the European Commission for project activity - from 2020 to the present; Expert in Health technology assessment committees (2016-2019); Member of scientific juries for the acquisition of educational and scientific degrees and academic positions (according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria); Participation as an expert in the preparation of international health policy strategies.

Personal impressions: I have excellent personal impressions of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Desislava Vankova, DSc. She is conscientious, responsible and responsive, an inspirer of teaching and research activities. Her optimism and sense of humor are contagious.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT: I give a **comprehensive high rating to the candidacy** of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Desislava Vankova, DSc for occupying the academic position "Professor". With her scientific output in terms of quantity and quality, the innovativeness of the contributions in the scientific works, the competence, the in-depth approach, the precision, the image of an erudite teacher and inspirer for education, scientific research and public health application, she goes beyond the formal academic frames of this assessment.

CONCLUSION:

I give my positive vote „Yes” for **occupying the academic position „PROFESSOR”** by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Desislava Vankova, DSc.

I strongly recommend the respected members of the Scientific Jury **to vote positively** for **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Desislava Vankova, DSc** for occupying the academic position „**professor**” in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sport, professional field 7.1. Medicine and scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy" at the Faculty of Public Health, Department of "Social Medicine and Healthcare Organization" (competition published in the State Gazette, issue 07/23.01.2024).

10.05.2024
Stara Zagora

Reviewer:

Prof. D-r Juliana Krumova Marinova, PhD

Заличено на основание чл. 5,
§1, 6. „Б” от Регламент (ЕС)
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