

To the Chairman of the Scientific Jury,  
Determined by Order No. R-109-254/06.06.2025  
To the Rector of the Medical University of Varna

## OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Snezhana Veselinova Murgova-Balcheva, MD

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**Subject:** Announcement of a competition for the academic position of "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sports", professional field 7.1. "Medicine", in the scientific specialty "Eye Diseases" for the needs of the Department of "Optometry and Occupational Diseases", Faculty of Public Health, according to an announcement in the State Gazette, issue 30/08.04.2025

Dr. Elitsa Gercheva Hristova, MD is the only candidate in the announced competition. Documents specified in the regulations for the conditions and procedure for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at the Medical University - Varna have been submitted.

### **Brief biographical data**

Dr. Elitsa Gercheva Hristova was born in 1987 in the town of Novi Pazar. She graduated from medicine at the Medical University - Varna in 2012. From 2013 to 2017, she was a specialist in ophthalmology at SBOBAL-Varna and MU-Varna. In 2017, she obtained the specialty "Eye Diseases". In 2016, she obtained the ONS "Doctor" in Medicine, after defending a dissertation on the topic "Microstructural characteristics of changes in the macula in diseases of the retina with social significance". The same year, Dr. Hristova began working as an assistant professor in the Department of "Optometry and Occupational Diseases", MU-Varna, and in 2020 she became a chief assistant professor. In 2024, Dr. Hristova obtained a master's degree in "Health Management and Medical and Social Care", Medical University - Varna.

Dr. Hristova is fluent in English. She has participated in a number of national and international scientific conferences. She is the winner of: 1st prize - Poster Competition held within the framework of the Congress "News in Ophthalmology" 2014; 1st prize - "Surgical" Session of the Science and Youth Competition 2014; 2nd prize - Poster Competition at the XVII Annual Meeting of the Union of Ophthalmologists in Bulgaria 2014; 2nd prize - "Jubilee Scientific Student Session" - 2011. and 2 grants from the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and from

the American-Austrian Foundation, as well as a scholarship from the Bulgarian Academy of Medicine.

**Assessment of scientometric indicators in connection with participation in a competition for the academic position of "associate professor"**

**I. Scientific research activity:**

Dr. Elitsa Hristova's total publication activity includes 33 scientific papers. She has submitted the following for participation in the competition:

- Dissertation for the acquisition of the ONS "doctor" on the topic "Microstructural characteristics of changes in the macula in retinal diseases of social importance", 2016.
- Monograph - Refraction - clinical principles and algorithms, 2024.
- Full-text publications in scientific journals and collections outside those for the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor" - 17 (of which 5 in foreign scientific publications referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information /WOS/Scopus/, 12 in non-refereed journals with scientific review.
- Full-text publications in scientific journals and collections in connection with the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor" - 4 in non-refereed journals with scientific review
- Full-text publications in scientific journals and collections outside the minimum scientometric requirements for holding the AD "Associate Professor" - 1

The total number of points from indicators G5-9 is 202.25.

Dr. Hristova has participated with a report or poster in a total of 29 national and 8 international scientific conferences.

In 2024, a monograph by Dr. Hristova was published: "Refraction - Clinical Principles and Algorithms" It is a systematized scientific and applied work dedicated to one of the fundamental topics in ophthalmology - clinical refraction. The aim of the work is to provide both a thorough theoretical summary of the basics of light and eye optics, as well as practical algorithms applicable in modern ophthalmological and optometric practice.

According to the submitted reference, 4 citations of Dr. Hristova's scientific works in foreign scientific publications referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information /WOS/Scopus/ were found in the library of MU-Varna.

The indicated citations according to indicators D10-12 carry a total of 60 points, with a minimum requirement of 60 points.

Dr. Hristova participates in 5 projects funded by MU-Varna, one of which she is the head.

**II. Teaching and teaching activity:**



According to the provided reference, the teaching experience of Dr. Hristova as of 15.04.2025 is 08 years.07 months.08 days. She is a lecturer at the Department of Optometry and Occupational Diseases of MU - Varna, participating in the training of students in the specialty "Optometry" and in the training of Bulgarian and English-speaking students in Medicine and Dentistry, resident doctors, in thematic courses, with the academic workload being as follows: - in academic 2022/2023 the total workload is 169 hours; - in academic 2021/2022 the total workload is 488 hours; - in academic 2020/2021 the total workload is 425 hours, - in academic 2019/2020 the total workload is 72 hours. During the academic years 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2022/2023, 2023/2024, Dr. Hristova was on maternity leave. It is noteworthy that Dr. Hristova's academic workload significantly exceeds the required 220 hours for the positions she held.

### **III. Medical and diagnostic activities**

Dr. Hristova actively participates in the medical and diagnostic and consultative work at USBOBAL-Varna, as well as in various screening programs. The main clinical interests of Dr. Hristova are related to the study of the retina in norm and pathology with optical coherence tomography; clinical and scientific assessment of retinal diseases of social importance in our country; oculoplastic surgery - possibilities for aesthetic surgical correction of patients with benign and malignant neoplasms of the eyelids and those who have suffered serious traumatic injuries to the eye and its appendages.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Dr. Elitsa Hristova, MD fulfills each of the criteria of the national minimum requirements and covers all the criteria in the PRAS of the Medical University of Varna for the position of "Associate Professor", which gives me reason to give my positive vote and recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award Dr. Elitsa Gercheva Hristova, MD the academic position of "Associate Professor".

12.08.2025

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Prepared by: .....

/Prof. Dr. Snezhana Murgova, MD; PhD/

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