TO THE CHAIR OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY,
FACULTY OF MEDICINE,
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY "PROF. DR. PARASKEV STOYANOV" – VARNA

S T A T E M E N T

for the Academic Position of Associate Professor
From: Prof. Elitsa Petkova Encheva-Mitsova, MD, PhD
Head of the Educational Sector "Radiotherapy" at
Department of Nuclear medicine, Methabolic therapy and Radiotherapy
Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna
Head of the Radiotherapy Clinic, University Hospital "St. Marina" – Varna

Regarding the competition for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine, scientific specialty "Nuclear Medicine", announced in the State Gazette, issue 30 of April 8, 2025, for the needs of the Department of Nuclear Medicine, Metabolic Therapy and Radiation Therapy, Faculty of Medicine, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

On the basis of Rector's Order No. 109-258 of June 6, 2025, and by decision of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury, I was appointed to prepare statement for the present competition.

The only applicant is Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Marina Dyankova, PhD, from the Department of Nuclear Medicine, Metabolic Therapy and Radiation Therapy, Faculty of Medicine, Medical University – Varna.

I. Brief Biographical Data

Dr. Marina Dyankova was born on February 3, 1985, in Odessa, Ukraine. She graduated with distinction from the Faculty of Medicine at Odessa State Medical University in 2008, after which she specialized in Family Medicine (2008–2010) and obtained the specialty in *General Practice* in 2010. She had her diploma officially recognized and legalized in Bulgaria in 2013, subsequently working at "Klinika Nova" Medical Center – Varna (2014–2015).

Since 2015, she has been part of the team at the Clinic of Nuclear Medicine and Metabolic Therapy, University Hospital "St. Marina" – Varna, where she works in close collaboration with multidisciplinary teams for the diagnosis and treatment of oncological diseases.

In 2018, she was appointed as a part-time assistant at the Medical University – Varna, and in February 2019, she was enrolled as a full-time PhD student under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Borislav Chaushev, MD, PhD, with the PhD thesis "68Ga-PSMA PET/CT in Prostate Cancer: Advantages and Potential Diagnostic Pitfalls."

In 2019, she obtained the specialty in Nuclear Medicine, and in 2020 she assumed the position of Assistant Professor at the Department. In 2023, she was promoted to the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor.

She is fluent in three languages – Russian, Ukrainian, and English – which facilitates her international collaborations, participation in congresses, and access to up-to-date scientific literature.

II. Scientometric Indicators

Dr. Dyankova participates in the competition with 37 scientific works, comprising full-text articles, conference papers, and abstracts.

Of these, 15 are full-text articles, 11 of which have been published in peer-reviewed journals indexed in international databases such as Scopus *and* Web of Science.

A total of 25 are abstracts of papers presented at scientific forums in Bulgaria and abroad, demonstrating her active engagement in the professional community and her commitment to disseminating research findings.

She is first author in 12 publications, second author in 5, and co-author in the remaining 20, which highlights her substantial personal contribution to a significant portion of the scientific output.

The total impact factor of her publications amounts to 369.979, which is considerably above the minimum requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor and attests to the international relevance of her research.

Her publications have been widely cited, both nationally and internationally, confirming the high scientific value and timeliness of her results.

III. Evaluation of Scientific Contributions

1. Nuclear Oncology (Studies related to Prostate Cancer)

Dr. Dyankova has conducted extensive and in-depth research on the application of 68Ga-PSMA PET/CT in prostate cancer. These investigations are the first of their kind in Bulgaria and include a large cohort of patients with biochemical recurrence following radical treatment.

Key prognostic factors influencing the positivity of PSMA-PET results have been identified, including PSA levels, Gleason score, ISUP grade, and clinical T stage. The sensitivity, specificity, PPV, and NPV of the method, as well as detection rates across various clinical scenarios, have been thoroughly analyzed.

Of particular value is her detailed assessment of potential diagnostic pitfalls—such as physiological PSMA uptake, pathological antigen expression in non-prostate diseases, and the underlying causes of false-positive and false-negative results. This knowledge has direct clinical applicability and can enhance diagnostic accuracy and the selection of optimal therapeutic strategies.

The outcomes of Dr. Dyankova's studies have a direct impact on the concept of salvage radiotherapy in patients with early biochemical recurrence, contributing to improved personalization of treatment and optimization of therapeutic results.

2. Nuclear Oncology (Studies related to Other Oncological Diseases)

In addition to her research on prostate cancer, Dr. Dyankova has also investigated the application of nuclear medicine methods in other diseases such as Langerhans cell histiocytosis, multiple myeloma, ovarian carcinoma, hyperparathyroidism, and malignant melanoma. Within these studies, diagnostic protocols were developed and optimized with the aim of enhancing efficiency and reducing the time required for establishing a diagnosis.

IV. Assessment of Publications and Personal Contribution

The scientific output of Dr. Dyankova is of **high scientific and practical value**. It demonstrates consistency in her research activity, strong teamwork skills, and leadership in the development of projects. Her leading authorship in a significant part of the publications highlights her **active involvement at all stages**—from the formulation of the research hypothesis to the interpretation of results and their presentation at scientific forums.

V. Conclusion

On the basis of the submitted materials and the evidence provided for high scientific, teaching, and clinical competence, I propose that Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Marina Dyankova, PhD, be elected to the academic position of Associate Professor in Nuclear Medicine at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Prepared and submitted by:
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