

REVIEW

BY:: Prof. Elena Mladenova Shipkovenska, MD, PhD
Member of the scientific jury – order No. R-109-441/05.12.2024 To the Vice-Rector of MU-Varna

REGARDING : Competition for the academic position of “ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR” in the field of higher education 7 “Health and Sports”, in the professional field 7.4. Public Health; scientific specialty “Public Health Management”

In the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Public Health Management", only one candidate participated, Martin Ognyanov Mirchev, PhD, who is currently a Chief Assistant Professor, Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

LEGALITY OF THE COMPETITION

The competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" has been announced in compliance with the regulatory requirements and those noted in the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at MU-Varna, as follows:

1. The competition was opened by decision of the Academic Council, upon the proposal of the Head of the Department of "Social Medicine and Health Care Organization, Medical University - Varna and by Order No. R-109-441/05.12.2023 of the Vice-Rector of MU-Varna.

2. The competition was announced in the State Gazette- issue 85/08.10.2024 and on the website of MU-Varna.

3. The two-month deadline for submitting documents after the announcement of the competition was met.

The candidate meets the conditions for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor":

1. Master of Law, Master of History of Philosophy and Master of Public Health.
2. Holds the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" - Diploma No. 371/23.12. 2019 in the scientific specialty "Public Health Management"
3. His total teaching and teaching experience as a chief assistant is over 2 years.
4. Holds the scientific specialty "Medical Informatics and Health Management"

Based on these data, I believe that the conduct of the competition and the admission of the candidate to participation meet the requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in "Public Health Management", according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation.

EDUCATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Senior Assistant Professor Martin Ognyanov Mirchev is a representative of the new generation of researchers who receive serious educational training before starting their research activities. He holds a bachelor's degree in "Philosophy" from the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" /2006-2010/, a master's degree in "History of Philosophy" from the same university /2010-2011/, a master's degree in "Law" from the Varna Free University /2007-2015/ and a master's degree in "Public Health" from the Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov" - Varna /2017-2018/.

His career development began in 2014. as a part-time assistant at the Faculty of Public Health, Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization, MU-Varna, and from 2015 until now he has been a full-time and chief assistant in the same department. He trains students in medical ethics in English and Bulgarian.

He has a scientific and educational degree in "Public Health Management" since 2019 after successfully defending a dissertation on the topic "Ownership of patient information in the context of Big Data".

He is a member of the Bulgarian Association for Bioethics and Clinical Ethics, the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and the Bulgarian Scientific Society for Public Health.

He is fluent in English.

ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The works submitted for participation in the competition, a total of 13, reflect the candidate's scientific and research activities in the period 2019-2024, after acquiring the scientific and educational degree "doctor" and are arranged according to the following template:

- **Criterion A:** /50 points /

.To cover the minimum scientometric indicators in group A, a diploma for awarding the scientific and educational degree "doctor" is presented;

- **Criterion B:** /100 points/

To cover the minimum scientometric indicators in group B, a monographic work "Ethical Challenges to Digital Health and Technologies" is presented.

- **Criterion G:** / 267.5 points/

To cover the minimum scientometric indicators in group G, the following were selected: 4 publications in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information and 8 publications in journals not referenced in world-renowned databases with scientific information.

- **Criterion D:** / 90 points/

. To cover the minimum scientometric indicators in group D, a reference for 6 citations in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information (SCOPUS, Web of science) was provided.

- The distribution of scientific works by the candidate's position in the author teams shows that he is mainly an independent or first author - in 11 publications;

second author - in 1 publication and seventh author - in 1 publication. The scientific works are printed in authoritative Bulgarian and foreign journals.

• **Impact factor** of the journals in which the candidate has publications IF – 14.886.

The scientific activity of Senior Assistant Professor Mirchev includes:

- 3 participations in international scientific forums and 5 participations in national congresses and conferences.
- He is a member of the Bulgarian Association of Bioethics and Clinical Ethics, of the European Public Health Association (EUPHA)

The report shows that the works presented by Senior Assistant Professor Mirchev, in a scientometric aspect, meet the minimum requirements of the Bulgarian Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for the academic position of "Associate Professor".

THEMATIC FOCUS OF SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The main directions in scientific research work are related to:

1. Ownership of patient information

A systematic and comprehensive search was carried out in 4 databases of scientific information, PubMed, ScienceDirect, Scopus and Springer, for studies published between January 2000 and October 2019. Of the thousands of publications dedicated to Big Data, Senior Assistant Professor Mirchev reviewed over 700 issues and, after assessing their admissibility, included 32 eligible articles. The author found that the ownership of medical data is assessed by different authors in terms of 5 aspects: *ethical, legal, political, managerial, and combinations of them*. Trends in the perception of patient information from the perspective of ownership - as public or private - are indicated. In most publications, the ownership of medical data is presented as a challenge to society and institutions and no categorical positions on the issue are stated. The author cites a number of examples that access to global databases may have the potential to transform real evidence in medicine and healthcare and to reveal unexpected new opportunities for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The critical philosophical and ethical analysis of the admissibility of the idea of ownership of patient information shows the benefits and risks for people from the access and use of the titanic amount of medical data that is generated today. Mirchev proves that the role of patient information in the context of Big Data is of fundamental importance, because it becomes a valuable source of information for the entire sphere of modern healthcare.

The main contributions of the candidate in this direction can be systematized as follows:

- a./ For the first time in Bulgaria, an ethical analysis of the concept of ownership of patient information has been carried out based on the basic principles of biomedical ethics /autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence

and justice/. The main challenges, risks, benefits and opportunities of using medical information have been presented

b./ For the first time in our country, the methodology for conducting a scoping review has been applied in relation to the problem posed.

c./ Two potential solutions have been proposed: 1. Patient information and its useful uses should be regulated without an established right of ownership; 2. If ownership is recognized, it should be limited in view of the possible useful uses for scientific and research medical purposes.

2. *Ethics in digital health*; In this direction, I highly appreciate the monographic work of senior assistant Mirchev - "*Ethical challenges to digital health and technology*". The work is an attempt to supplement the scarce information and analyses made so far in Bulgaria on the philosophical justification and interpretation of "ethical" and "digital". This monograph has an analytical, overview and provocative nature. The focus is on the risks of rapid technological development in healthcare - potential dehumanization of medical practice. and endangerment of fundamental principles and expectations for modern healthcare, such as the inviolability of the person, the right to privacy, confidentiality, etc. The monograph includes a conceptual framework, a historical review of scientific and technological innovations in medicine and healthcare, and the changes that have occurred in human relationships. Special attention is paid to the use of data, the existing regulatory frameworks and some ideas for future digital development. It is emphasized that the use of patient information has both scientific and commercial significance, which makes its regulation at this stage: "a complex and almost unsolved problem". The contemporary problems arising from technological development are competently and critically examined - the potential dehumanization of medical practice and the deepening of inequalities in access to medical care.

3. *Medical ethics, doctor-patient relationships and bioethical principalism*. Senior assistant Mirchev thoroughly and comprehensively explores complex, debatable issues of our time, generated by the public interest of people in ethical problems in medicine and healthcare. Special attention is paid to different points of view; changed traditional models of relationships in clinical practice in order to increase the active role of the patient in the decision-making process. The author proves that the aspiration of modern man to get everything from healthcare, without being sufficiently aware of his obligations to his own health and that of society, leads to the emergence of conflict points between doctor-patient and weakening of trust in all kinds of authorities. The important role of the digital world, which, being easily accessible, often creates a false sense of competence on various issues and the risk of mutual alienation, is also examined.

4. *Social Justice in Times of Crisis: COVID-19*; The author realistically analyzes the situation in the country during the COVID-19 pandemic and

emphasizes that on the surface of social life, along with numerous anti-crisis precautions, disagreements in society are emerging. The issue of prioritization and reprioritization in healthcare during emergencies and the precautions imposed by healthcare institutions are examined. The phenomenon of "escape from freedom" is studied, examining external restrictions and imposed boundaries, as well as those that individuals set for themselves as a defense mechanism in conditions of uncertainty. The specific relationship between social justice and the bioethical principles of non-harm is examined.

EVALUATION OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- Senior Assistant Professor Mirchev has over 4 years of total teaching experience /senior assistant professor/ at the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University of Varna.
- He participates in teaching the disciplines "Medical Ethics" (also Medical Ethics and Deontology, Ethics, Ethics in Public Health, Bioethics and Artificial Intelligence) to students of the following specialties: Medicine (Bulgarian-language program); Medicine (English-language program); Dental Medicine (Bulgarian-language program); Dental Medicine (English-language program); Nursing; Midwifery; Health Management (Bachelors); Speech Therapy (Bachelors); Health Care Management (Bachelors); Health Care Management (Masters); Public Health Protection and Control (Masters); Pharmaceutical Management and Care (Masters); Technology Transfer and Innovation in Pharmacy (Masters); Artificial Intelligence in Biomedicine (Masters); Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare (Masters); Biomedical Engineering and Technologies (Bachelors).
- The candidate's academic workload goes beyond the framework of regulatory requirements and ranges from 405 to 487 hours for the last 5 years.

The teaching and learning activities of Senior Assistant Professor Mirchev meet the requirements for "Associate Professor". He demonstrates the qualities of a continuously developing academic personality in the field of public health.

CONCLUSION

The entire scientific production of Senior Assistant Professor Mirchev contains significant contributions of a theoretical, cognitive and practical-applied nature in the field of healthcare. As a general characteristic of the scientific works, I emphasize the relevance of the topic under consideration, the author's sensitivity to poorly studied problems in healthcare, innovative ideas and the possibility of practical application of the results.

The candidate fully meets the conditions of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulation of the

Medical University of Varna for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor". This gives me reason to give my positive assessment and to propose to the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury to also vote positively for awarding Senior Assistant Professor Martin Ognyanov Mirchev, PhD , the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Public Health Management", professional direction 7.4. Public Health, for the needs of the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

Sofia, 06.02.2025

REVIEWER:

/Prof. E. Shipkovenska, MD, PhD /

Заличено на основание чл. 5, §1, б. „В“ от Регламент (ЕС) 2016/679
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