

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Silviya Pavlova Nikolova, PhD
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Member of the **Scientific Jury**, appointed by Order No. R-109-441/05.12.2024 of Prof. Dr. Dimitar Raikov, MD, Rector of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna, in accordance with the decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Public Health, Protocol No. 235 from 27.11.2024, and based on the report with entry No. 102-3324/26.11.2024 from Assoc. Prof. Natalia Usheva, MD – Head of the Department of Social Medicine and Health Organization.

Subject: Procedure for the position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education: 7. Healthcare and sports, professional field: 7.4. Public health, specialty: Public Health Management.

In the competition, announced in the State Gazette issue No. 85 from 08.10.2024, there is a single candidate – PhD Martin Ognyanov Mirchev. All necessary documents and references from the candidate have been presented in accordance with the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its application regulations, and the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at MU-Varna.

Academic and Professional Biography of the Candidate

Martin Ognyanov Mirchev was born on February 16, 1987, in Varna, Bulgaria. He completed his secondary education in his hometown, then continued his studies at leading academic institutions. In 2010, he obtained a bachelor's degree in philosophy, and in 2011, a master's degree in the history of philosophy. Additionally, in 2015, he completed a master's degree in law, which expanded his academic profile with legal aspects. In 2018, he obtained a master's degree in public health from Medical University – Varna, laying the foundation for his professional development in healthcare. In the same year, he began his doctoral studies in public health management at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Organization at MU-Varna. His dissertation, titled "Ownership of Patient Information in the Context of Big Data," was evaluated as relevant and innovative, and in 2024, he was awarded a specialization in "Medical Informatics and Health Management." Martin Mirchev's professional career began in 2014 as a visiting assistant at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Organization at MU-Varna. In 2015, he was appointed as an assistant, and in 2019, he was promoted to senior assistant. Since 2018, he has also taken on administrative functions as an administrative assistant, further developing his organizational and managerial competencies. The candidate's scientific output includes one monograph of 174 pages and 20 scientific articles totaling 107 pages. He has participated in 8 scientific forums, 5 of which were in Bulgaria and 3 abroad. The candidate is proficient in English, allowing him to actively participate in international scientific projects and academic events.

Assessment of the Candidate's Scientific Contributions

The scientific works presented by Martin Ognyanov Mirchev in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the specialty "Public Health Management" cover the period from 2019 to 2023 and demonstrate active and multifaceted research activity. The

distribution of the works by type shows a balance between theoretical developments and applied research, including a habilitation work (monograph), dissertation, and publications in scientific journals and conference proceedings. The works are published in both Bulgarian and English, highlighting the international focus of the candidate's scientific work. The authorship is diverse, with the candidate being the sole author of 4 publications and a co-author of 8, in 6 of which he is the first author, showing a leadership role in scientific work. His participation in scientific conferences in Bulgaria and abroad, including in Marseille, Rome, and Dublin, underscores a high level of scientific communication and engagement with international issues such as patient information rights and ethical aspects in healthcare. The candidate's scientific work during the reviewed period indicates high scientific productivity, professionalism, and active involvement in international scientific discussions. The candidate is the author of research in four main scientific areas, addressing current social and ethical issues in the context of contemporary healthcare and its digitalization.

1. Ownership of Patient Information in the Context of Big Data – The candidate initiated the first in-depth study in Bulgaria on the ownership of patient information in the era of Big Data. His research includes a historical and normative comparison of legislation in Europe and the USA and proposes new philosophical and ethical approaches for regulating this issue in Bulgaria.
2. Ethics in Digital Health and New Technologies – In this area, the candidate explores the opportunities and risks associated with the implementation of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain in healthcare. His studies analyze the long-term social and health consequences of the digitalization of healthcare and provide specific recommendations on ethics and privacy in future research and developments in this field.
3. Medical Ethics and Ethical Principlism – Within this scientific focus, the candidate examines the core principles of medical ethics, such as autonomy, justice, empathy, and the ethics of the doctor-patient relationship. He analyzes the ethical challenges arising in the context of new technologies in healthcare and the need for a balance between innovation and the preservation of ethical integrity in practice.
4. Social Justice in Crisis Times – In this area, the candidate explores the social and ethical consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on equitable access to healthcare and limited resources in crisis situations. He presents recommendations for fair policies and solutions to ensure healthcare access for the most vulnerable groups in society.

The candidate has published in refereed and indexed scientific journals with a total impact factor of 14.886, has an h-index of 2, and 56 citations (Google Scholar Metrics), highlighting the significance and impact of his work in the scientific community.

Assessment of the Monograph

Martin Ognyanov Mirchev's monograph, titled "Ethical Challenges of Digital Health and Technologies (Some Contexts and Considerations)," addresses the current topic of ethical challenges in digital healthcare. In the context of global digitalization, the author analyzes key issues with both academic and practical significance, including the impact of artificial intelligence, telemedicine, and Big Data on medical practice and social inequality. The work is logically structured into five parts, covering the definition of key concepts, historical context, philosophical and ethical reflections, practical aspects, and ethical evaluation. The author demonstrates in-depth knowledge and analytical skills, successfully combining philosophical and practical perspectives. Special attention is given to topics such as patient autonomy, confidentiality, and the risks of

dehumanization in medical practice. The exposition is clear and well-reasoned, using precise scientific terminology and appropriate philosophical frameworks. The work is accessible both to healthcare professionals and to a wider audience interested in ethics and technology. With its thorough research and critical approach, Martin Ognyanov Mirchev's monograph makes a significant contribution to the scientific discussion in the field of ethics in digital health. The author's competence in analyzing complex ethical and philosophical issues, combined with the practical significance of the topic discussed, highlights his academic maturity and ability to conduct high-level scientific research. This work undoubtedly enriches the academic space and demonstrates the author's potential for future contributions in the field, making him a strong candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor."

Assessment of Teaching Contributions

The candidate has 9 years and 2 months of teaching experience at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Organization, where he teaches the course "Medical Ethics" to students from various disciplines, including medicine, dental medicine, health management, biomedical engineering and technology, and master's programs related to artificial intelligence in healthcare. His teaching activities allow for the integration of ethical principles in various healthcare and technological contexts, enriching students' academic preparation and shaping their professional and ethical attitudes. Through his work with diverse student groups from various specialties, the candidate supports the preparation of responsible healthcare professionals.

Personal Impressions of the Candidate

The candidate is a team-oriented colleague who actively participates in the department's joint initiatives and is open to collaboration. His approach creates a constructive working atmosphere and fosters the exchange of ideas. He supports the department's projects in Social Medicine and Health Organization, contributing his professional opinion and engagement to their successful discussion and implementation.

Conclusion

The scientific output and teaching activities of Martin Ognyanov Mirchev meet the requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education: 7. Health and Sports, professional area: 7.4. Public Health, specialty: Public Health Management. His academic and professional biography, as well as his contributions in the fields of ethics in digital health, health information privacy, and social justice during crises, confirm his capacity for significant scientific work and pedagogical effectiveness.

In light of his comprehensive research, high-level academic output, contributions to international academic discourse, and substantial teaching experience, I strongly support the candidacy of Dr. Martin Ognyanov Mirchev for the position of Associate Professor.

07.02.2025
Varna

Member of Scientific Jury
/Assoc.Prof. Silviya P. Nikolova. /

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