

## REVIEW

by

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*Subject:* Competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.4. Public Health, in the scientific specialty "Public Health Management" for the needs of the Department of Social Medicine and Healthcare Organization, Education sector "Medical Ethics and Law", Faculty of Public Health at MU - Varna, announced in the State Gazette No. 85 / 08.10.2024.

The scientific jury was appointed by Order of the Rector of Medical University Varna No. R-109-441/05.12.2024, and by Protocol No. 1/19.12.2024 of the meeting of the Scientific Jury, I was appointed to prepare a statement.

Within the legal deadline for the announced competition, one candidate submitted documents and participated - Chief Asst. Martin Ognyanov Mirchev, and the submitted necessary documents comply with the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at the Medical University - Varna.

### **Biographical data on the candidate's career development**

Martin Ognyanov Mirchev was born in 1987 in Varna. From Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" he obtained in 2010 a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy, and in 2011 a Master's degree in History of Philosophy. The candidate's academic qualifications also include a Master's degree in Law from Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar" (2015). From the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna, Martin Mirchev successively obtained the degrees "Master" in Public Health in 2018, and "Doctor" in Public Health Management in 2019. From the same university, he has a certificate and a recognized specialty "Medical Informatics and Health Management" in 2024.

The candidate began his teaching activity in 2014 at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization of the Faculty of Public Health at MU - Varna, where he works to this day. He successively holds the positions of part-time assistant, assistant and chief assistant. He teaches the discipline "Medical Ethics" (also Medical Ethics and Deontology, Ethics, Ethics in Public Health, Bioethics and Artificial Intelligence) to students from the Bulgarian-language and English-language programs of the specialties of MU - Varna.

Chief Asst. Martin Mirchev has many years of experience in the position of administrative assistant at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization.

He participates in the Quality Commission at the Faculty of Public Health and at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization.

He is a member of Bulgarian Public Health Association, European Public Health Association, Bulgarian Public Health Scientific Society, Bulgarian Association for Bio and Clinical Ethics.

His English language skills, as well as his computer literacy, are at the highest professional level.

### **Evaluation of the candidate's scientific research and applied scientific activity**



Chief Asst. Martin Mirchev, presents scientific production that meets the necessary minimum requirements for the scientific activity of candidates for the acquisition of the academic position "Associate Professor" at MU - Varna and includes the following 14 scientific works that reflect the scientific research activity in the period after acquiring the "Doctor" degree: Dissertation work for acquiring the "Doctor" degree (Group A), Habilitation work in the form of a Monograph (Group B), 12 scientific publications and reports - 11 (Group D), as well as one publication outside the minimum requirements. According to the language in which the scientific works were published, the distribution is 6 publications in Bulgarian and 6 in English.

The distribution of the candidate's scientific works and presentations submitted for the competition are as follows:

- 1) Dissertation for the "Doctor" degree
- 2) Monographic work
- 3) Scientific publications in refereed journals - 4 titles
- 4) Publications in non-refereed journals - 7 titles
- 5) Beyond the minimum requirements - 1 publication in English
- 6) Participation in scientific congresses, conferences and symposia - 8, 3 of which abroad and five in Bulgaria
- 7) Citations – 6

The scientific works of Chief Asst. Martin Mirchev are in several areas, with the main part corresponding to the scientific specialty of the given competition – Public Health Management:

- Ownership of patient information in the context of Big Data (A1, G7.1, G7.2, G7.3, G8.7);
- Ethical challenges to digital health and technologies (B3);
- Medical ethics and ethical principles – respect for autonomy; principle of justice; empathy and alienation, rule of veracity and trust between doctor and patient; the bioethical prism to the issue of personal patient responsibility for health, as a factor for prioritization in healthcare (G7.4, G8.1, G8.3, G8.5);
- Social justice in times of crisis: COVID-19 (G8.4, G8.6, G8.2).;

In this competition Chief Asst. Martin Mirchev presents a set of scientific works, distinguished by the originality of the author's approach and the diversity of the researched topics. I accept all scientific contributions indicated in the relevant reference.

The achieved theoretical and practical results form a solid scientific contribution, which is presented in the scientific publications submitted for participation in the competition, divided into the following four main thematic areas:

**- Ownership of patient information in the context of Big Data;**

This thematic area includes the Dissertation for the acquisition of the "Doctor" degree, as well as four of the publications, thus reflecting the significance and fundamental role of this issue for the scientific development of the candidate.

The scientific and theoretical research, which represents the core of the work of Chief Assistant Mirchev in this area, can be characterized as innovative, extending to contemporary challenges, the relevance and critical need for which to be analyzed cannot be underestimated:



- For the first time in the Bulgarian scientific environment, the issue of ownership of patient information in the context of Big Data has been considered;
- A historical overview of the emergence and development of the Information Revolution and Big Data has been made;
- The importance of Big Data for the healthcare sector is analyzed and the main challenges, risks, benefits and opportunities are presented;
- The role of patient information in the context of Big Data is analyzed;
- The concept of “ownership” is defined and its content is clarified in the specific context of patient information;
- The regulatory framework for the ownership and protection of patient information is presented and a comparative analysis of their regulatory regulation in Europe and the USA is conducted;
- Trends in the perception of patient information from the perspective of ownership – as public or private – are presented and an analysis of their advantages and disadvantages is conducted;
- For the first time in Bulgaria, a philosophical analysis of the concept of personalization of patient information has been carried out through the application of basic philosophical approaches and teachings - ontology, epistemology, axiology and anthropology,
- For the first time in Bulgaria, an ethical analysis of the concept of personalization of patient information has been carried out based on the basic principles of biomedical ethics - autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice.

At the same time, the candidate does not neglect the applied and practical aspects of the issues characterizing this scientific direction:

- For the first time in our country, the methodology for conducting a scoping review in relation to the problem posed has been presented and applied;
- For the first time in Bulgaria, a study has been conducted to determine the scope of scientific literature on the issue of ownership of patient information in the context of Big Data;
- Main moral, ethical and normative problems related to the ownership of patient information in the context of Big Data have been identified;
- Based on a philosophical and ethical analysis, a fair approach to the ownership of patient information is proposed.

Based on the practical problems thus identified, specific possible solutions are proposed: (i) patient information and its beneficial uses should be regulated without an established right of ownership; (ii) if the right of ownership is recognized, it should be limited in view of the possible beneficial uses for scientific and medical research purposes.

### **- Ethical challenges to digital health and technology**

Although this area includes only the habilitation monography as a scientific work, the scope of the problems considered and the depth of the presented research are a clear indication of the candidate's future scientific and research interest in this area. The main scientific questions considered are:

- Overview of the leading technological trends in digital health of our time, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies;
- Historical analysis of the interrelationships between technological evolution and the acceptance of changes in a social context;
- Philosophical analysis and an attempt to take stock of the impact of digital technologies on people;
- Ethical analysis with a focus on the risks of technological development;



- Successful, unsuccessful and unfulfilled practices in the development of digital technologies.

A systematic historical, philosophical and ethical analysis of the impact of digital technologies on people, both in a positive and negative aspect, has been made.

#### **- Medical Ethics and Ethical Principles**

Four publications have examined the specific relationships and dependencies between: the fundamental principles of bioethics (Autonomy, Non-maleficence, Beneficence, Justice) and specific practical contexts.

Particular attention is paid to the candidate's ability to focus his research on new problems and challenges in the field of medical ethics. The problem of the conflict points between empathy and alienation in the light of the doctor-patient relationship is posed, comparing the influence of the factors "empathetic behavior" and "practical skills" on the patient's trust in his healer. It has been established that emotional differentiation is necessary to ensure medical objectivity in emotionally charged situations, and to guarantee the absence of adverse consequences for the patient.

#### **- Social Justice in Times of Crisis: COVID-19;**

In three of the publications in this scientific area, with the precision and clarity characteristic of the candidate, the pressing issues of social justice in times of crisis are analyzed and debated. The achievement of a balance between the legality and morality of anti-crisis measures on the one hand, and individual expectations for respect for traditional rights on the other, is studied. Atypical conditions naturally imply atypical solutions. In this regard, three concepts have been studied:

- The phenomenon of "escape from freedom", examining external restrictions and imposed boundaries, as well as those that individuals set for themselves – as a protective mechanism in conditions of uncertainty. It has been established that given the normative nature of external restrictions, they can be easily removed, but the internal ones (self-isolation, avoidance of others and mistrust) can have very serious consequences.
- Challenges facing healthcare during emergencies - it has been established that the decision to limit access to healthcare is not a discrediting decision, but a necessary response to the challenges that the emergency situation creates. The question is how to do this in accordance with ethical requirements and to make it consistent and understandable for the community:
- The specific relationship between social justice and the bioethical principles of non-maleficence and beneficence. Chief Asst. Martin Mirchev establishes that it is the emergency situation that creates objective prerequisites for awareness of the social role, social justice in fair relationships between individuals and society, as a social duty of each of us.

The reference from the Library of the Medical University of Varna verifies the candidate's scientometric indicators: individual IF - 6.345 and general IF - 14.886; 6 citations in foreign publications.

In 12 (86%) of the publications of Chief Asst. Mirchev is an independent or first author, and in one of the presented articles he is a second and third or subsequent author.

#### **Evaluation of the candidate's teaching and learning activities**



Chief Assistant Martin Mirchev has over 10 years of work experience, of which 9 years of teaching experience at MU-Varna as an assistant and chief assistant professor with annual classroom work in the range of 407 and 487 academic hours, which exceeds the established norm for non-habilitated lecturers at MU-Varna of 360 hours. He teaches students from various specialties: Medicine (Bulgarian and English-language program), Dental medicine (Bulgarian and English-language program), Healthcare Management (Bachelor's and Master's Degrees), Management of cares (Bachelor's and Master's Degrees), Public Health Protection and Control (Master's Degrees), Pharmaceutical Management and Care (Master's Degrees), Biomedical Engineering and Technologies (Bachelor's Degrees), Artificial Intelligence in Biomedicine (Bachelor's Degrees), specialties of Medical College - Varna.

The table below presents the systematized data on the scientific production of Chief Asst. Martin Mirchev, indicated in the competition for the position of "Associate Professor" in accordance with the scientific-metric requirements for the respective academic position:

Group of indicators	Minimum required points	Submitted by the candidate
A	50	50
B	100	100
Г	200	267,5
Д	50	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>507,5</b>

The data presented in the reference show that the candidate reaches or significantly exceeds the required levels in all groups of indicators.

### **Personal impressions**

I have known Chief Asst. Martin Mirchev since the period of his work in the Department of Accreditation and Quality management at the Medical University - Varna, and then from his teaching career in the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization as a very thorough, consistent and precise expert, young scientist and lecturer. Ethics in relations with students and colleagues is not only the matter of the subject he teaches, but is also a personal characteristic of Chief Asst. Mirchev, making him a very respected colleague. For the organization of academic work in the Academic Sector and our Department, he has a very responsible and successful role, holding the position of administrative assistant.

### **Conclusion**

The candidate for participation in this competition meets the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations on the terms and procedure for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at the Medical University – Varna, for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor".

Based on the overall professional development, scientific research, applied scientific activity, teaching activity and practical experience of the candidate, I express a convinced *positive* opinion, and propose to the members of the Scientific Jury to elect Chief Assistant Martin Mirchev, for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.4. Public Health, in the specialty "Public Health Management" for the needs of the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization at the Faculty of Public Health of the Medical University - Varna.

Заличено на основание чл. 5,  
§1, б. „В“ от Регламент (ЕС)  
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January 15, 2025

Chairman of the Scientific Jury: .....

Assoc. Prof. Natalya Usheva, DM, PhD