

STATEMENT

by Prof. Makreta Todorova Draganova, MD

Head of the Department of Health Care Management, Medical Ethics and Information technologies, Vice Dean of Faculty of Public Health, Medical University - Pleven, designated as a member of the Scientific Jury by Order No. R-109-441 dated 15.12.2024 of Prof. Dr. Albena Kerekovska, MD, Vice Rector of Medical University Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov, Varna, and with Minutes of meeting No. 1/19.12.2024 of the Scientific Jury, designated for the preparation of a Statement

Subject: Procedure for attaining the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Public Health Management" (Bulgarian and English-language training), professional direction 7.4. Public Health, in the field of higher education 7. Health and Sports for the needs of the Training sector of Medical Ethics and Law of the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organisation at the Faculty of Public Health, MU -Varna.

Chief Assist. Prof. *Martin Ognyanov Mirchev*, MD, PhD. is participating in the competition, announced in State Gazette Issue 85/08.10. 2024. All documents and materials provided electronically fully comply to the requirements set forth by the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria (ASDRB), the Regulations on the Implementation of the Law on ASDRB and the Regulations on the Development of the Academic Staff in MU-Varna.

I. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FOR THE CANDIDATE

Martin Ognyanov Mirchev, MD, PhD, was born on February 16, 1987 in Varna, Bulgaria. In 2010, he graduated with distinction from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", with a degree in "Philosophy". Mr. Mirchev continued his academic development by earning three Master's degrees in consecutive fields: "History of Philosophy" (2011), "Law" (2015) and "Public Health" (2018). In 2019, he completed a doctoral program in "Public Health Management" at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" in Varna. He was also awarded a recognized specialty "Medical Informatics and Health Management" in 2024.

Martin Mirchev began his teaching career in 2014 at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization within the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University of Varna, where he currently holds a position. He was progressively advanced through the ranks, from part-time assistant to assistant, and now to chief assistant. He teaches various courses, including "Medical Ethics" (also Medical Ethics and Deontology, Ethics, Ethics in Public Health, Bioethics and Artificial Intelligence) to students across nearly all disciplines at the university.

Fluent in both written and spoken English, Mr. Mirchev also possesses advanced computer literacy and strong internet skills.

II. SCIENCE AND RESEARCH ACTIVITY

2.1. General Description of the Submitted Materials:

Scientific indicators

Ch. Assist. Prof. Martin Ognyanov Mirchev, MD, PhD, participated in the evaluation process with a list of 12 scientific publications that do not overlap with the evidence submitted for the awarding of his PhD degree. The presented scientific works include a total of 14 publications, which are categorized as follows: Dissertation for PhD degree (Group A); Habilitation Work in the Form of a Monograph (Group B); Scientific Publications and Reports (Group D), 4 articles published in refereed scientific journals indexed in world-renowned scientific databases and 7 articles published in non-refereed scientific journals. The distribution of the candidate's scientific works and presentations submitted for the competition is as follows:

1. Dissertation work
2. Monograph
3. Scientific publications in refereed journals - 4 titles:
4. Scientific publications in non-refereed journals - 7 titles:
5. Participation in scientific congresses, conferences and symposiums - 8 presentations:
 - a. three abroad
 - b. five in Bulgaria
6. Additional publication beyond the minimum requirements - 1 publication in English
7. Citations - 6 issues

2.2. Characteristics of the Presented Works

1. By position of the Candidate in the Author Teams:

Position	Number of Works	Percentage (%)
Independent or First Author	11	86%
Second Author	1	7%
Third and Subsequent Author	1	7%
Total	14	100.0

2. By Thematic Focus, Martin Mirchev's Scientific Works are Divided into the Following areas:

- 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 Truthfulness and Trust between Doctor

and Patient; The Bioethical Perspective on Personal Patient Responsibility for Health, as a Factor in Healthcare Prioritization (G7.4, G8.1, G8.3, G8.5);

➤ Social Justice in Times of Crisis: COVID-19 (G8.4, G8.6, G8.2).

Summarized Data for the Scientific Works of Martin Mirchev, MD, PhD, Submitted for the Competition for the Academic Position of “Associate Professor”:

Groups of indicators	Content	Assoc. Professor (points)	Martin Mirchev, MD, PhD
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 4	100	100
G	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	200	267,5
D	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	50	90
Total		400	507,5

Scientometric Data of the Scientific Papers Submitted for the Competition:

Total Impact Factor: 14,886; Individual IF: 6.345

2.3. Characteristics of the Candidate's Scientific Activity

The scientific works submitted for the competition by Martin Mirchev, MD, PhD, demonstrate significant original scientific contributions to the field, based on research results published in monographs and articles.

1. Ownership of Patient Information in the Context of Big Data;

Nearly half of the candidate's scientific publications focus on this area, which is particularly relevant given Dr. Mirchev's interest in the topic, which began in 1018 during the preparation of his thesis on the subject.

Through these scientific publications, Ch. Assist. Prof. Martin Mirchev makes a notable contribution to the development of evidence-based medicine. The key contributions on his works in this area include:

- Examination of the issue of ownership of patient information within the context of Big Data;
- Analysis of the evolution of modern technologies and Big Data as core elements of the ongoing information revolution. The candidate analyses the impact of Big Data on social health, thanks to what is shared on social networks.

2. Ethical Challenges to Digital Health and Technology

The papers in this area are closely related to the previous one. They provide an overview of the leading technological trends in digital health today, highlighting both the promising opportunities and potential risks. The works examine the hopes associated with emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain, while also addressing concerns regarding patient and personal data, confidentiality, and the potential for abuse due to a lack of transparency in data usage. The issue of patient's own incompetence in managing their data is also discussed.

Additionally, a systematic historical, philosophical and ethical analysis is presented, exploring the impact of digital technologies on individuals, considering both their positive and negative aspects.

3. Medical Ethics and Ethical Principalism

The area investigates the special relationships and interdependencies between the fundamental principles of bioethics (Autonomy, Non-maleficence, Beneficence, and Justice) and specific practical contexts.

Martin Mirchev's efforts to address new challenges in the field of medical ethics are commendable. One of the key issues examined is the conflict between empathy and alienation within the doctor-patient relationship. The works compare the influence of two critical factors - "empathic behaviour" and "practical skills" on the patient's trust in their healthcare provider. It is concluded that emotional differentiation is crucial to maintaining medical objectivity necessary to ensure medical objectivity in emotional situations, and to guarantee the absence of adverse consequences for the patient.

4. Social Justice in Times of Crisis: COVID-19;

In three publications within this scientific direction, Martin Mirchev, with his characteristic precision and clarity, addresses and analyses crucial issues related social justice during times of crisis. The research explores the balance between the legality and morality of anti-crisis measures, on the one hand, and the individual expectations for the respect of traditional rights, on the other. Atypical conditions, such as those brought on by crisis, naturally require atypical solutions. In the context, the following three concepts have been examined:

- The Phenomenon of "Escape from Freedom". This concept explores both external restrictions and the boundaries that individuals set for themselves as protective mechanism in uncertain times. It is found that while external restrictions can be lifted once they are no longer necessary, the internal ones (such as self-isolation, avoidance of others, and mistrust) may have lasting and serious consequences.
- Challenges Facing Healthcare during Emergencies: The research concludes that the decision to limit access to healthcare in emergency situations is not a discrediting one, but rather a necessary response to the challenges posed by the crisis. The key issue is how to implement such measures ethically, ensuring they are consistent and understandable to the community.
- The Relationship between Social Justice and Bioethical Principles (Non-maleficence, Beneficence): Mirchev argues that it is emergency situation itself that creates the

objective conditions for an awareness of social roles, social justice, and the importance of fair relationship between individuals and society. He emphasizes that social justice is a social duty that applies to all of us, particularly in crisis situations.

With a clear awareness of the emerging new issues in public health, Mirchev's appropriately highlights the importance of to digital health and technologies, advocating for further research in this field to address these challenges.

2.4. Pedagogical Activity of the Candidate

Chief Assist. Prof. Martin Mirchev has over 10 years of professional experience, including 9 years of scientific and teaching experience at Medical University of Varna. He has served as an assistant, senior assistant and chief assistant. Throughout his career, he has been actively involved in teaching a wide range of students, including: Medical students (in both Bulgarian and English-language training), Bachelor's and Master's degree students in Healthcare Management, Bachelor's and Master's degree students in Health Management, Master's degree students in Public Health, Student from the Medical College - Varna.

2.5. Scientific Contributions

A well-argued and objective reference for the scientific contributions in each thematic area has been provided, which I fully endorse. In summary, the contributions are outlined in the section "Characteristics of the Scientific Works".

Additionally, a reference from the MU-Varna library confirming 6 citations in foreign publications has been included.

CONCLUSION

After carefully analysing the well-documented evidence, I can confidently state that the candidate's professional, research and teaching activities fully meet the requirements set forth by the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation, and the Regulations on the Development of the Academic Staff in MU-Varna.

Based on the comprehensive evaluation of the candidate's profile and the facts presented above, I am pleased to provide my positive assessment. I strongly recommend that the Honourable Scientific Jury cast a favourable vote for the awarding of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in in the scientific specialty Public Health Management, professional direction 7.4. Public Health, within the field of Higher Education 7. Health and Sports. This position is for the Training sector of Medical Ethics and Law at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organisation, Faculty of Public Health, MU -Varna to MARTIN OGNYANOV MIRCHEV, MD, PhD.

03. 02. 2025 r.

Prepared the statement:
(Prof. Makreta Draganova, PhD)

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