

REVIEW

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Regarding: competition for acquiring an academic position „Associate Professor” of specialty Health Care Management, professional direction 7.4 Public Health, in the field of higher education 7. Health and Sports, for the Affiliate Sliven, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna, published in the State Gazette, issue 85/October 08, 2024.

Introduction to the competition

By order № R-109-438 of December 05, 2024 of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna, I am included as an external member of the Scientific Jury for the announced competition for the academic position “Associate Professor” in the State Gazette issue 85/October 08, 2024.

According to Protocol No. 1 of 18.12.2024. since the first meeting of the Scientific Jury, I am appointed to prepare a statement of review.

One candidate is participating in the announced competition – Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhedzheva, PhD. The candidate has submitted all the necessary documents for participation in the competition are according to the requirements of the Regulations on Academic Staff Development at MU-Varna.

The procedure for announcing the competition is in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for the Academic Staff Development of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

I. Analysis of the career profile of the candidate

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Miteva Dzhedzheva, PhD acquired the specialty "Nurse" at the Institute for Health Specialists "Dr. Petar Beron" Sliven in 1984, and later semi-higher education in the same specialty in a Medical Institute - Sliven. In 1999 she completed a Bachelor's and later a Master's program (2006) in "Health Care" at the Medical University - Sofia. In 2019 Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhedzheva successfully defended a dissertation at the "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna on the topic “Blood-borne viral infections - HBV, HCV, HIV - occupational risk and prevention among nurses” and obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in the scientific specialty "Health Care Management". In 2016 acquired a specialty in "Public Health".

She started her professional experience in 1984 as a nurse. In the period 1984-1997 she

worked in the Nursery No. 13 in Sliven. Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva, PhD has administrative and managerial experience as head nurse in the Center for Skin and Venereus Diseases - Sliven LTD.

The academic career started in 1998 as an academic lecturer at Thracian University - Stara Zagora, Medical College - Sliven, and from 2013 to the present, he holds the position of "chief assistant" in the Department of "Health Care" of the Affiliate Sliven, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva, PhD is not only an experienced specialist in health care, but also an active participant in the scientific and academic community.

Forms of continuing education contribute to further professional development, improving educational and qualification skills. Her participation in scientific forums and educational projects highlights her contribution to the development of knowledge and practices in the field of health care.

II. General description of the submitted materials

The submitted competition materials for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" in the specialty „Health Care Management“ in the field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.4 Public health are in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its Application, and the Rules for the Regulations for the Academic Staff Development of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

III. Evaluation of the scientific works of the candidate for the entire academic development

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Miteva Dzhezheva, PhD has presented scientific papers proving the fulfillment of the minimum requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor" distributed in a scientometric aspect, as follows:

- dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" – 1 (A1);
- habilitation work – monograph – 1 (B3);
- publications and reports published in scientific editions, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information – 2 (G7);
- publications and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes – 8 (G8);
- publications and reports published presented out of the minimum scientometric requirements for holding the academic position Associate Professor – 1;
- publications submitted for the PhD - 3.

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva's scientific production for participation in the current competition includes full-text publications covering the minimum scientometric requirements for occupying the academic position "associate professor" (10 publications) and full-text publications in scientific journals and anthologies, beyond the minimum scientometric requirements for the holding the AP "associate professor" (1 issue).

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva, is independent and first author in 64% of the actual works presented for the competition: as an independent author of 2 works, and in co-authorship – 9 works, of which as first author in 5 publications.

In subgroup G7. there are 2 full-text publications presented in Web of Science. In subgroup G8. there are 8 full-text publications, of which 5 in conference proceedings and 3 publications in non-refereed journals with scientific review.

Dzhezheva's scientific works have been published in academic journals such as Trakia Journal of Science, Journal Nursing Care, Varna Medical Forum, News of the Union of Scientists-Sliven and in Conference Proceedings. All full-text publications are attached in electronic format to the competition materials.

The candidate presents 7 citations D (10-12) – 55 items, fulfilling the minimum requirements for AP "Associate Professor".

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva presents participation in 10 scientific forums, including 1 international conference.

Ch. Assist. Prof Pepa Dzhezheva PhD has over 21 years of teaching experience, of which over 4 years of experience at Chief Assistant Professor. Her academic workload is very high (over 600 hours) and significantly exceeds the required standard for teaching employment of non-qualified persons.

The candidate has active scientific profiles in Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ORCID, ResearcherID, eLibrary.

The scientometric indicators of Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva meet the criteria provided in the Law for academic development and the Regulations of the Medical University of Varna (Annex 1) for occupying the academic position "associate professor."

Table 1. Compliance with the scientometric requirements of MU-Varna for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor "

Group/metrics	Number of points /required/	Number of points based on presented evidence
A	50	50
-	-	-
B	100	100
G	200	220
D	50	55
ОБЩО	400	425

The scientific and applied contributions of Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva are focused in areas:

- Public Health – health promotion, prevention, and improving health literacy;
- Health Care – patient safety, infection prevention, and the quality of nursing care;
- Medical Pedagogy – development of innovative methods for nursing education.

The candidate's scientific works are distinguished by an interdisciplinary approach, combining medical, pedagogical, and social aspects. The research is characterized by an in-depth analysis of existing practices and the proposal of innovative solutions to improve healthcare and the training of medical professionals.

The candidate examines the historical development of nursing education, outlining key stages in its evolution [B3, Г8.4]. Through an analysis of regulatory frameworks and qualification requirements, the research proposes recommendations for improving educational programs. A significant contribution is the assessment of the professional competencies of nurses, which provides a foundation for modernizing educational approaches.

In addition to exploring the development of nursing education in the city of Sliven, the author has direct professional experience within these educational structures, which ensures a deeper understanding of the administrative, organizational, and pedagogical changes. This enhances the objectivity and reliability of the research [Г8.4].

The monograph developed by Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva examines and defines key concepts such as "regulated profession" and "competence," providing clarity regarding the legal requirements for practicing the profession [B3].

Models for critical thinking and clinical reasoning have been developed, which support the development of professional competence. The author outlines the connection between knowledge, skills, and competencies, which is a significant contribution to improving the educational process. Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva demonstrates a strong commitment to the training of medical professionals through the development of innovative teaching methods, critical thinking, and effective communication. The conducted research is aimed at solving problems and evidence-based practices. The candidate develops and implements training modules that stimulate the development of analytical and critical thinking among students.

Through experimental research, the effectiveness of the situational method and problem-based learning has been evaluated, demonstrating an improvement in decision-making abilities in a clinical setting.

Pedagogical communication methodologies have been developed to optimize the teaching process and enhance interactivity in education [B3, G7.2, G8.8].

Experimental studies have been conducted, proving the effectiveness of the situational method and problem-based learning as tools for improving clinical skills. The analysis includes comparative data between traditional educational methods and innovative strategies based on the active participation of students in practical case studies.

Part of the candidate's scientific research presents methodological aspects of planning, organizing, and implementing problem-based learning in clinical practice [G7.2]. Approaches and techniques such as simulation methods, clinical case studies, and problem-solving are presented, emphasizing their significance for the professional development of future medical professionals.

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva research analyzes risk factors for nurses and students in a hospital environment, leading to the development of strategies to minimize hazards [A1, B3,

G8.3, G8.6]. The study emphasizes the importance of openly discussing errors and proposing strategies for their prevention as part of the process of professional development and ensuring safety and quality in healthcare. Special attention is given to the interconnection between critical thinking and patient safety, which contributes to the development of new standards for clinical practice.

A significant portion of the scientific publication by Chief Assistant Prof. Pepa Djejeva is focused on establishing the importance of health literacy and patient education [A1, G7.1, G8.1, G8.2, G8.5, G8.6, G8.7]. The importance of effective communication between medical professionals and patients has been highlighted. Educational models for patients with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, have been developed, improving adherence to therapy and quality of life. Modern aspects of healthcare, including the impact of technology on patient care, have been analyzed.

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva examines and clarifies concepts such as health literacy, health culture, and health education, contributing to the development of the terminological base in this field. The analysis of students' self-assessment of their communication skills and the factors hindering their communication with patients has been used by the candidate to improve educational programs and develop future medical professionals.

Particular attention has been given to patients with specific conditions, such as diabetes and stroke. The study of patients' self-assessment regarding their knowledge and skills in managing their condition highlights the importance of an individualized approach to education. The analysis of the awareness of parents of children with diabetes reveals the need for a comprehensive educational approach that includes communication and practical skills. The study of the needs of patients who have experienced a stroke emphasizes the importance of long-term care and the necessity of health education for the prevention of relapses.

IV. Evaluation of the Monograph or Equivalent Publications Submitted for the Competition

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva, PhD The candidate is participating in the competition with a habilitation work (monograph) titled: Problem-Based Learning – An Activating Educational Technology in the Training of Nurses (2024), published by the University Publishing House of the Medical University of Varna. The monograph includes an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. It has two scientific reviewers and carries the ISBN 978-619-221-518-7. The volume of the monograph is 130 pages, distributed as follows: table of contents (1-2 pp.), reviews (3-7 pp.), list of abbreviations (8 pp.), introduction (9-12 pp.), Chapters I-IV (13-117 pp.), conclusion (118-119 pp.), and bibliography (120-129 pp.).

The habilitation work examines problem-based learning as an innovative educational technology aimed at developing critical thinking and clinical competencies in the training of nurses. The focus is on the application of problem-based learning (PBL) as a method to enhance the effectiveness of the educational process and improve the professional skills of future medical professionals. An analysis of the educational challenges and the competency-based approach in nursing education has been conducted. Approaches for the application of problem-based learning in clinical training have been proposed. The monograph explores the theoretical foundations, practical application, and effectiveness of problem-based learning in the training of nurses. The results demonstrate that the method is a powerful tool for improving the quality of education and shaping competent medical professionals.

The main focus of the monograph is on problem-based learning as a powerful didactic technology that can improve the effectiveness of education. The significance of critical thinking, the practical application of knowledge, and the need for innovative approaches in medical education are outlined. This contribution highlights the candidate's ability to create and implement educational tools that develop critical thinking—a key skill in healthcare professions.

Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva explores and substantiates the role of the competency-based approach in medical education. She presents the qualification profile of the "Nurse" specialty, which contributes to a more precise formulation of educational goals.

The work provides guidance for the development of key professional competencies and functions of nurses in various sectors of healthcare.

By integrating clinical case studies, the modules connect theoretical knowledge with its practical application, preparing students for real-world challenges. The testing of these modules demonstrates a commitment to evidence-based education, ensuring that the methods are effective and have a positive impact.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the situational method and problem-based learning in clinical practice highlights the focus of the research on assessing pedagogical approaches, particularly the situational method and problem-based learning. By evaluating their effectiveness, the candidate contributes to the optimization of teaching strategies, ensuring that they meet the needs of modern healthcare education.

The introduction of pedagogical communication methodologies in teaching highlights the importance of effective communication in education, where clear and empathetic communication is essential. The implementation of pedagogical communication techniques enhances the interaction between educators and students, creating a more engaging and supportive learning environment. This approach not only improves knowledge transfer but also prepares students for effective communication in their future clinical roles.

V. Overall assessment of the candidate compliance with the minimum national requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and Regulations for the Academic Staff Development of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

Based on the positive assessment and analysis of her overall scientific and pedagogical work, as well as in accordance with the criteria of the Act for the Development of Academic Staff in Bulgaria and the Regulations of the Medical University – Varna, Ch. Assist. Prof. Pepa Dzhezheva PhD meets the scientometric requirements for acquiring the academic position of "Associate Professor."

She has a well-established research profile, with her scientific work including both theoretical-cognitive and practical-applied contributions. She actively works with students, both as a lecturer and as a methodological supervisor of their research. The candidate provides up-to-date scientific output with significant potential for practical application..

VI. Conclusion

After thoroughly reviewing the provided documentation and conducting a comprehensive assessment of the research and teaching activities of the candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in "Health Care Management," I believe that Chief Assist. Prof. Pepa Miteva Dzhedzheva, PhD, fully meets all requirements.

In view of the above, I give a positive opinion and recommend to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to vote in favor of **Chief Assist. Prof. Pepa Miteva Dzhedzheva, PhD**, for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in "Health Care Management," in the higher education field 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.4 Public Health, for the needs of the Department of "Health Care" Affiliate Sliven, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

February 19, 2025

Varna

Member of the Scientific Jury:.....

/ Prof. Silviya Borisova Dimitrova, PhD, DSc/

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