

To the Chairperson of the Scientific Committee
Appointed by Order No. R – 109 – 197/16.04.2025
of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna,
Prof. Dimitar Raykov, MD, DSc

REVIEW

by

Prof. Penka Peneva Stefanova-Peeva, MD, DSc

Member of the Scientific Committee, appointed by Order No. R– 109-197/16.04.2025
of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna

Subject: Competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Higher Education Area 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.1. Medicine, Scientific Specialty "Pediatric Surgery" for the Department of General and Operative Surgery at the Faculty of Medicine, and for the First Surgical Clinic at St. Marina University Hospital, Varna; announced in State Gazette Issue No. 15 of 21.02.2025.

By Order No. . R– 109-197/16.04.2025 of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna, I was appointed as a member of the Scientific Committee, and by Protocol No. 1 from the first meeting of the Committee held on 30.04.2025 I was designated as a reviewer in the procedure for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of Pediatric Surgery. The sole applicant in this competition is Dr. Petar Stamov, MD, PhD.

The documents submitted by the candidate comply with the Regulations for the Acquisition of Academic Degrees and the Occupation of Academic Positions at the Medical University of Varna, and include the following:

1. Application to the Rector requesting admission to the competition;
2. Signed curriculum vitae;
3. Certified copy of Master's degree diploma with academic transcript;
4. Certified copy of Doctoral degree diploma with academic transcript;
5. Certified copy of specialization diploma in the healthcare field;
6. Certificate of professional experience in the relevant specialty;
7. Certificate of teaching experience;
8. Academic workload report;

9. Medical certificate;
10. Criminal record certificate;
11. Notification regarding personal data protection;
12. Declaration of authenticity of submitted documents, completed and signed by the candidate;
13. Academic report issued by the MU-Varna Library, including: List of publications and citations meeting the minimum national requirements; Full-text publications and citations beyond the minimum scientometric criteria; List of scientific works and citations used for obtaining the PhD degree; Appendix with active profiles in Google Scholar and ORCID (and other academic platforms such as ResearchGate);
14. Monographic/habilitation work.

Biographical Information:

Dr. Petar Stamov was born in Tetovo, Macedonia, on January 10, 1983. He graduated from secondary school in 2001 with a specialization in Dental Technology. He obtained his higher medical education from the Medical University of Varna in 2007 (Diploma Series MU-2007 No. 080192).

Professional Qualifications:

Dr. Petar Stamov graduated from the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna in 2007. In 2008, following a competitive selection process, he began a specialization in Pediatric Surgery, with his initial professional appointments at the Emergency Medical Center – Varna and the Pediatric Surgery Clinic at St. Anna University Hospital – Varna.

In 2015, he obtained his specialty in Pediatric Surgery. In 2021, he began a doctoral program at the Pediatric Surgery Clinic of University Hospital "N.I. Pirogov" – Sofia. Since 2022, he has been part of the team at the First Surgical Clinic and the Pediatric Surgery Unit of St. Marina University Hospital – Varna. In 2023, following a competitive selection process, he was appointed as Assistant Professor at the Department of General and Operative Surgery at MU–Varna.

In 2024, he successfully defended his dissertation entitled: "Method for Temporary Decompression of the Gastrointestinal Tract via Formation of an Enterostomy with T-shaped Drainage in Neonates with Low and Extremely Low Birth Weight", under the supervision of Prof. Hristo Shivachev, and was awarded the academic and scientific degree "PhD".

Postgraduate Training:

Dr. Stamov has completed numerous practical courses and trainings, including:

- Diagnostic Esophagogastroduodenoscopy and Video Colonoscopy;
- Therapeutic Esophagogastroduodenoscopy and Video Colonoscopy;
- Conventional Abdominal Ultrasound in Gastroenterology and Superficial Structures;
- Transanal Endoscopic Microsurgery (TEM);

- Training course in Minimally Invasive (Laparoscopic) Surgery.

Memberships:

Dr. Stamov is an active member of several professional organizations, including:

Bulgarian Medical Association;

Bulgarian Scientific Society of Pediatric Surgery;

Bulgarian Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition;

Bulgarian Pediatric Association.

Academic and Research Activity:

Scientometric Indicators

The provided academic report demonstrates that Dr. Petar Stamov meets the minimum national requirements set forth in the Act on the Development of Academic Staff (ADAS) for holding the academic position of Associate Professor, as well as the internal requirements of the Medical University – Varna (Table 1). Against the required minimum of 400 points, Dr. Stamov has submitted evidence supporting a total of 412 points.

Table 1. Summary of Compliance with the Requirements for the Academic Position

Group of Indicators		Minimum National Requirements (ADAS) – Total Points	Minimum Requirements of MU–Varna – Total Points	Dr. Petar Stamov, MD, PhD
A	Indicator 1	50	50	50
B	Indicator 2	-	-	-
C	Indicator 3 or 4	100		100
D	Sum of Indicators 5 to 9	200	200 (≥ 60 pts from Indicator 7 for clinical specialties)	202 pts (92 pts from Indicator 7)
E	Sum of Indicators 10 to 12	50	50	60
F	Sum of Indicators 13 onwards	-	-	-
Total Score		400	400 (≥ 60 pts from Indicator 7 for clinical specialties)	412 (92 pts from Indicator 7)

Dr. Petar Stamov is participating in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor with a total of 14 scientific works, as outlined below:

- 1 PhD dissertation titled: “A Method for Temporary Decompression of the Gastrointestinal Tract via Enterostomy with T-Tube Drainage in Neonates with Low and Extremely Low Birth Weight”.
- 1 habilitation thesis (monograph) titled: “Contemporary Approaches in Pediatric Endoscopy”, published in 2025 (ISBN 978-619-221-546-0).
- 11 scientific publications, including: 2 in journals with Impact Factor (IF), 2 in peer-reviewed and indexed journals, 7 in non-indexed journals. These publications contribute 202 points, meeting the minimum national and institutional scientometric requirement of 200 points. Authorship breakdown shows Dr. Stamov as: First author in 12 publications (92.3%), Second author in 1 publication (7.7%).
- Additionally, Dr. Stamov submitted 1 full-text publication in scientific journals/proceedings outside the minimum requirements, contributing an extra 15 points.

His scientific production covers the period 2019–2025, encompassing six active research years. The research focuses on a wide thematic spectrum, primarily in: Pediatric surgery, Gastrointestinal diseases, Minimally invasive procedures and Prevention and treatment of various surgical conditions.

Citations:

According to a report from the Medical University – Varna Library, Dr. Stamov has received 4 citations, accounting for 60 points under Indicators D10–D12. A detailed list of these citations is attached to the application materials.

Evaluation of the Monograph:

The monograph “Contemporary Approaches in Pediatric Endoscopy” by Dr. Petar Stamov addresses a highly relevant and complex issue within modern pediatric surgical practice. The subject matter is of undeniable current significance and possesses a distinct multidisciplinary orientation, offering valuable insights not only for pediatric surgeons but also for pediatricians, gastroenterologists, and endoscopists.

This work stands out for its scientific rigor and practical applicability. It features a comprehensive and well-structured literature review, incorporating both international and national sources, which the author has synthesized and interpreted with clarity and precision. This foundation supports a well-reasoned and detailed discussion of the topic, demonstrating the author’s capacity to grasp key trends in the field and to provide an objective, critical analysis.

Particularly noteworthy is the practical component of the monograph, which goes beyond theoretical discourse to offer clearly formulated recommendations and guidelines for conducting diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopic procedures in children. Dr. Stamov

convincingly argues that endoscopic interventions should not be regarded merely as diagnostic tools, but rather as an integral part of comprehensive therapeutic strategies, including postoperative follow-up and complication prevention.

A critical highlight of the monograph is its emphasis on the necessity for specialized training and certification of pediatric surgeons and pediatricians performing endoscopic procedures. This standpoint is of key importance for ensuring the safety, effectiveness, and quality of diagnostic and therapeutic interventions, as well as for the successful interdisciplinary integration of endoscopy within pediatric surgical practice.

The monograph presents robust scientific reasoning, an extensive literature base, and practical insights aimed at both experienced endoscopists and young specialists at the beginning of their careers. Through this work, Dr. Stamov contributes meaningfully to the improvement of diagnostic and therapeutic standards and to the advancement of interdisciplinary collaboration in pediatric surgery.

The scientific merit of the monograph highlights the author as a specialist with clearly defined research interests and the ability to integrate theoretical knowledge with clinical practice. This makes the monograph a valuable resource for pediatric surgeons, pediatricians, endoscopists, and general practitioners alike.

Evaluation of Research Activity and Scientific Contributions of the Candidate

The research activity of Dr. Petar Stamov encompasses the full spectrum of modern conventional and minimally invasive pediatric surgery. The scientific contributions, as evidenced by the materials submitted, can be structured into four main thematic areas within different domains of pediatric surgery.

1. Surgical Interventions in Neonatal and Early Childhood Age

Within this area, several significant theoretical and applied scientific contributions can be identified:

Four of the submitted articles focus on surgical diseases in the neonatal and early childhood period, analyzing both diagnostic and therapeutic approaches specific to this age group (G.7.1, G.7.3, G.8.1, G.8.5).

- A particularly rare clinical case is presented, describing the co-occurrence of Wilkie's syndrome and congenital hypertrophic pyloric stenosis. The case highlights the diagnostic challenges posed by overlapping symptomatology. An effective single-stage surgical approach—pyloromyotomy combined with a duodeno-duodenostomy—is proposed and demonstrated to be clinically applicable in similar complex presentations.
- A valuable contribution is made toward a better understanding of neonatal appendicitis, a rare but clinically significant condition. The work emphasizes the necessity of considering it in the differential diagnosis of neonatal intestinal obstruction. Early diagnosis, effective treatment, and improved prognosis are supported through a multidisciplinary approach.

- The importance of Doppler ultrasonography is underscored as a key non-invasive method for distinguishing testicular torsion from inflammatory conditions in cases of acute scrotum. This facilitates timely diagnosis and appropriate therapeutic decisions, thereby preventing irreversible testicular damage.
- The urgency of early diagnosis and prompt consultation with a pediatric surgeon in suspected cases of incarcerated inguinal hernia is emphasized. The need for rapid intervention to prevent ischemic complications is highlighted, along with the importance of accurate differential diagnosis from other clinically similar conditions.

2. Abdominal Surgery and Therapeutic Approaches to Inflammatory Diseases

Another four publications address key issues in abdominal surgery and the management of inflammatory conditions, evaluating both surgical and conservative therapeutic approaches and their effectiveness (G.7.2, G.8.2, G.8.3, G.8.7).

- The role of postoperative antibiotic therapy following appendectomy in cases involving periappendicular abscesses is investigated. The findings support the feasibility of successful treatment without the routine use of systemic antibiotics, in accordance with the principle “Ubi pus, ibi evacua”. The study underscores the importance of a personalized and rational approach to antibiotic use.
- A comparative analysis of therapeutic strategies for intussusception in early childhood is presented, emphasizing the relatively high rate of surgical intervention. The need for early and accurate diagnosis is stressed, along with recommendations for optimizing diagnostic and therapeutic algorithms to reduce the necessity for operative treatment.
- The therapeutic options for cecal diverticulitis are analyzed, focusing on the choice between conservative and surgical management. The work advocates for an individualized treatment strategy to avoid unnecessary surgical procedures while ensuring clinical safety and efficacy.
- Surgical strategies for chronic pancreatitis are evaluated based on morphological changes. The findings highlight the effectiveness of internal drainage in cases of increased intraductal pressure and the role of resective techniques when neoplasia is suspected. Criteria for surgical decision-making are proposed with the aim of improving long-term outcomes and tailoring interventions to the patient’s anatomical and pathological status.

3. Minimally Invasive Procedures and Surgical Innovations

Two of the submitted publications focus on minimally invasive procedures and innovative surgical techniques aimed at reducing operative trauma, accelerating recovery, and improving clinical outcomes (G.7.4, G.8.6).

- A notable scientific and practical contribution is made through the evaluation of the safety and efficacy of percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG). The study analyzes indications, contraindications, and potential complications with the objective of optimizing the procedural technique and post-procedural care in pediatric patients.

- The effectiveness of methylene blue dye in enhancing the intraoperative visualization of sinus tracts during surgical treatment of sacrococcygeal pilonidal disease is demonstrated. The use of this method contributes to a reduced recurrence rate and improved postoperative outcomes by ensuring more complete excision of affected tissue.

4. Impact of COVID-19 on Surgical Practice

In addition, two publications examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on surgical practice, analyzing changes in the incidence and management of surgical cases during this period (G.8.4, G.8.8).

- The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the incidence and complication rates of acute appendicitis in children is analyzed. The study highlights the risks associated with delayed diagnosis and emphasizes the need to optimize emergency surgical workflows during healthcare crises to ensure timely and effective treatment.
- Changes in surgical practice during the pandemic are also reviewed, including access to medical care and surgeons' adaptations to new challenges. The role of minimally invasive techniques and infection control measures is underscored. The publication provides practical recommendations for maintaining effective surgical education and service organization in the face of future global health emergencies.

The principal areas of diagnostic and therapeutic focus in Dr. Petar Stamov's clinical and research work are centered on the investigation of diagnostic and treatment approaches for emergency and congenital surgical conditions in pediatric patients, abdominal surgery, and the management of inflammatory diseases. His work further encompasses minimally invasive procedures and surgical innovations aimed at reducing operative trauma and accelerating postoperative recovery. Additionally, he has conducted analyses on the broader social and clinical implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on surgical practice.

Dr. Petar Stamov has actively participated in a total of 36 scientific forums, both nationally and internationally. He has also been involved in the implementation of two educational projects:

1. Project BG05M2OP001-2.002-0001 "Student Internships" – Phase 1, under the Operational Programme "Science and Education for Smart Growth 2014–2020" – in the role of mentor during practical student training.
2. Project BG05M2OP001-2.013-0001 "Student Internships" – Phase 2, under the same operational programme – also serving as a mentor in the practical training of undergraduate students.

The submitted body of scientific work is sufficient in both volume and quality to support his application in the current academic competition. It fully meets the national criteria for the academic position of Associate Professor and complies with the internal requirements set by the Medical University of Varna.

Teaching Activity:

Dr. Petar Stamov commenced his teaching career in 2023, following a competitive selection process, when he was appointed to the academic position of Assistant at the Department of General and Operative Surgery, Medical University – Varna. His teaching responsibilities and workload include conducting practical exercises in "General and Operative Surgery" and "Surgical Diseases" for medical students enrolled in both Bulgarian- and English-language programs. Additionally, he has been involved in the training of interns and residents, as well as participation in examination committees. Dr. Stamov's total teaching load over the past two academic years amounts to 332 hours.

Conclusion:

Based on the conducted analysis and evaluation of the submitted materials for the competition, it can be concluded that the candidate meets the mandatory requirements and quantitative scientometric criteria for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor. For the reasons stated above, I provide a positive evaluation and recommend that the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury vote in favor of the appointment of Dr. Petar Stamov, MD, to the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific specialty of Pediatric Surgery, for the needs of the Department of General and Operative Surgery at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

16.06.2025

Plovdiv

Reviewer:

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

Prof. Penka Pencheva Stefanova-Peeva, MD, DSc