

SHORT REVIEW

from

Prof. Dr. Julian Ananiev, MD, PhD - Dean of the Medical Faculty, Trakia University, Head of Department of General and Clinical Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Deontology, and Dermatovenerology, Medical Faculty, Trakia University, Stara Zagora; Member of a scientific jury, appointed by order No. R-109-437/05.12.2024 of the Rector of the MU Varna

Procedure for the academic position "**Associate Professor**", in the scientific specialty "General and Clinical Pathology", professional direction 7.1 Medicine, field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, at the Department "General and Clinical Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Deontology", Faculty Medicine, MU Varna and Clinic of General and Clinical Pathology at the "St. Marina" - Varna with decision of FC No. 85 of 8.10.2024.

1. General

One candidate participated in the announced competition for the academic degree "**Associate Professor**" - Dr. Nadezhda Todorova Stefanova, MD, PhD, member of the academic staff of the Department of "General and Clinical Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Deontology", Faculty of Medicine, MU Varna, as she submitted her documents within the specified period, passed the relevant stages of document verification and is directed to a subsequent stage of the procedure. The candidate provides a complete set of documents for the academic position procedure.

2. Biographical data

Dr. Nadezhda Todorova Stefanova, PhD was born on December 10, 1986 in Pavlikeni. She finished her secondary education at Bacho Kiro Secondary School - Pavlikeni with a profile: natural sciences with intensive study of English. The same year, she was admitted to study in Faculty of Medicine at the Medical University - Varna, where she graduated in 2011. In the period 2012 - 2017, she is a PhD student at the Department of General and Clinical Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Deontology, specialty "Pathoanatomy and Cytopathology", Medical University - Varna with the topic of her thesis: "Expression of markers for autophagy and necroptosis in colon carcinoma". In 2018, she get a PhD degree, and in 2019 a specialty in "General and Clinical Pathology". Dr. Stefanova, PhD has a numerous trainings of the European Society of Pathology. She speaks English very well .

3. Scientific research activity

From the documents submitted for participation in the competition for "Associate Professor" in the professional field "Medicine" in the scientific specialty "General and Clinical Pathology", it is visible that Dr. Stefanova, PhD, has PhD-thesis on the topic: "Expression of markers for autophagy and necroptosis in colon carcinoma".

The publications submitted for participation in the competition under items Г7 and Г8 are 22 in total, reflecting the scientific and research activities of Dr. Stefanova, PhD in the period between 2017 - 2024. The candidate has prepared a reference and presents the indicated number of scientific publications, distributed as follows:

- **habilitation work** - monograph B3 - "Myeloproliferative neoplasias. Past, present and future", Medical University - Varna, 2023, ISBN:978-619-221-471-5 - 100 points;
- **publications in journals referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases Г7** - 11 in number, of which as first author or last author - 2 - 113.04 points;
- **publications in non-refereed journals Г8** - 11 publications, of which as first, last or single author - 4 - 89.98 points;
- **other publications** - 1 beyond the minimum scientometric indicators - 2.73 points;
- **citations** - a total of 4 - 60 points;

The documents – monograph, publications, list of participations in scientific forums, etc., show the deep and consistent interest of Dr. Stefanova, describing some of the areas of work and, as follows:

1) *Alternative molecular mechanisms of cell death and cell survival* – the mechanisms of occurrence and the role of alternative types of cell death (autophagy and necroptosis) in tumors are examined; a number of IHC analyses have been performed in search of correlations in patients with primary and metastatic colorectal carcinoma; the dual role of Beclin-1 has been studied in depth, as well as the monitoring of some factors in solid tumors.

2) *Diseases of the hematopoietic system* – in this group, the candidate's scientific works are focused on myeloproliferative neoplasias, as well as on the changes that occur in the bone marrow parenchyma when involved by non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; the influence of JAK2 V617F allele loading; VEGF expression in lymphoproliferative processes; monitoring the significance of other mutations; description of WHO criteria;

3) *Rarely diagnosed diseases* – articles in this group have mainly scientific and practical contributions, presenting interesting and rarely encountered in clinical practice cases;

4) *Experimental morphology* – studying the effect of melatonin in a model of gastric damage; the effect of fustin isolated from the wood of *Cotinus coggygia* in a model of TNBS-induced colitis and paracetamol-induced liver damage; studying the expression of NP-1 expression, etc.

5) *Infectious diseases* – presentation of findings and searching for correlations in patients with COVID-19.

6) *General biological processes* – the relationship between the thymus and the pineal gland and their role in the course of physiological processes.

The presented areas and directions of scientific interest of Dr. Stefanova demonstrate her diverse interests, the ability to select, synthesize and analyze scientific objects, as well as

to plan and participate in the various stages of scientific research related to various pathological processes significant for both scientific and diagnostic activities in her work.

Dr. Stefanova, PhD, declares her attendances in **23 international and 4 national scientific forums** with oral and poster presentations, as well as 4 more without active scientific participation.

The candidate present participation in 7 scientific research projects funded by the Science Fund and 1 attendance in a project funded by the Scientific Research Fund.

Based on the specified references from the candidate, it is evident that Dr. Nadezhda Stefanova, PhD, covers the required indicators and the relevant points, and in some places even exceeds them.

4. Educational and teaching activity

Dr. Stefanova, PhD has a well-established teaching profile and teaching experience, as an assistant and chief assistant. Based on the specified reference for teaching experience, it is visible that she conducts lectures and exercises in Bulgarian and English in the various students at MU-Varna. For the last five academic years, the teaching workload at the Faculty of Medicine of MU-Varna is as follows: 2019/2020 – 316 academic hours; 2020/2021 – 250 academic hours; 2021/2022 – 311 academic hours; 2022/2023 – 340 academic hours; 2023/2024 – 412 academic hours. The norm by decision of the AC of MU-Varna for year corresponds to 220 hours per year.

Dr. Stefanova, PhD is also the course supervisor of the 4th year "Medicine" - English-language training.

The academic workload is in accordance with the accepted requirements of the higher education institution and demonstrates the candidate's serious commitment to teaching and learning.

5. Clinical and diagnostic activity

I have known Dr. Nadezhda Stefanova for several years, and during this period I have formed the opinion that she is a precise specialist-pathologist, dedicated to clinical-diagnostic activity and constantly looking opportunities for improvement and upgrading of qualifications in various areas of her specialty. From her biography it is evident that she has a number of qualifications, participation in numerous forums, development of scientific production and etc. which is absolute proof of the profiling and competence of the candidate.

6. Conclusion

Based on the above, I can summarize that, based on the submitted documents, the candidate - **Dr. Nadezhda Todorova Stefanova, PhD** is a highly accomplished scientist and lecturer, as well as a pathologist, who combines precise diagnostic activity, teaching and scientific work. It can be seen that the scientific, publication and teaching activities of the candidate fully cover the requirements for the loan of AP "Assoc.Professor" in the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the MU – Varna.

That is why I give my positive short review and will confidently vote "Yes" the awarding of the academic position "**Associate Professor**" in "General and Clinical Pathology", and kindly invite the other members of the respected Scientific Jury to vote positively.

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Stara Zagora

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