STATEMENT

by

Prof. Dr. Veselin Todorov Belovezhdov, MD,

Head of the Department of "General and Clinical Pathology" at

Medical University – Plovdiv,

as a member of the scientific jury based on an order from the Rector of

Medical University – Varna,

Order No. R-109-437 / 05.12.2024

regarding the procedure for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor," announced in the State Gazette, issue 85 of November 8, 2024, in professional field 7.1 Medicine, 7. Healthcare and Sports, for the specialty "General and Clinical Pathology," at the Faculty of Medicine of the Medical University – Varna, Department of "General and Clinical Pathology, Forensic Medicine, and Deontology," Clinic of General and Clinical Pathology – University Hospital "St. Marina" EAD, Varna.

Materials were submitted for the competition electronic in format by Assistant Professor Dr. Martina Georgieva Stoeva, MD, which include all necessary documents in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Medical University – Varna.

I. Career Development of Dr. Martina Stoeva, MD

Dr. Martina Stoeva was born in the city of Blagoevgrad. In 2012, she completed her Master's degree in Medicine at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov," Varna. In 2013, she began her specialization in pathology at the Clinic of Pathology at University Hospital "St. Marina" EAD – Varna. Since 2015, she has been a part-time assistant at the Department of "General and Clinical Pathology, Forensic Medicine, and Deontology" at the Medical University – Varna, and since 2017, a full-time assistant. In the same year, she obtained a specialty in pathology.

Between 2019 and 2022, she was a full-time doctoral student at the Department of "General and Clinical Pathology, Forensic Medicine, and Deontology," specializing in "Pathological Anatomy and Cytopathology." The topic of her dissertation was "Immunohistochemical Expression of the Necroptosis Marker RIPK3 in Breast Carcinoma." She successfully defended her dissertation in 2022, at which point she was also appointed as a Chief Assistant Professor.

II. Description of the Scientometric Indicators of Dr. Martina Stoeva, MD

Over the years, Dr. Stoeva has published 22 articles, 17 of which were submitted for this competition. Among them, 11 articles are in peer-reviewed journals indexed in globally recognized scientific databases, 5 of which have an Impact Factor (IF), with Dr. Stoeva as the first author in one of them. An additional 6 articles have been published in non-indexed but peer-reviewed journals, where she is the first author in three. The total points accumulated from her dissertation and monograph amount to 224.31 points, exceeding the required 200 points.

Dr. Stoeva has also participated in 5 scientific projects, including:

1. "Experimental Study of the Effects of Biologically Active Plant-Derived Substances in a Metabolic Syndrome Model in Rats, Aimed at Developing Future Pharmaceutical Products or Dietary Supplements."
2. "Investigation of Immunohistochemical Markers of Necroptosis in Breast Carcinoma."
3. "Plasma Levels and Expression of Leptin and Adiponectin for Assessing Their Potential as Molecular Biomarkers in Colorectal Carcinoma."
4. "Predictive and Prognostic Role of the Immunohistochemical Expression of Apoptosis-Inducing Factor and RIPK3 (a Necroptosis Marker) in Renal Cell Carcinoma."
5. "Investigation of Apoptosis and Necroptosis Markers in Basal Cell and Squamous Cell Carcinomas."

She has also presented 5 reports and posters at national and international scientific forums, of which 4 were included in this competition. Furthermore, she has published a monograph titled "Pathomorphology of Prostate Carcinoma." Her work has been cited 4 times in indexed journals.

III. Assessment of the Contributions of Dr. Martina Stoeva's Scientific Work

Dr. Stoeva's scientific contributions are related to her dissertation work, specifically on breast cancer, her monograph dedicated to prostate cancer, and her publications in the following fields: rarely diagnosed diseases, experimental morphology, adipose tissue pathology, tumor and non-tumor diseases of the head and neck, molecular mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and infectious diseases.

Regarding breast cancer, an immunohistochemical analysis of the necroptosis marker RIPK3 was conducted to clarify its role in prognosis and survival outcomes in patients with mammary carcinoma, presenting original findings in the field.

In the area of prostate pathology, a comprehensive review of the structure of the prostate gland and its neoplastic diseases has been conducted. The most recent WHO tumor classifications for the urinary and male reproductive systems (2022) and the 8th edition of the AJCC cancer staging system have been utilized. Practical issues related to tumor grading using the Gleason score have also been discussed.

Among the works in the field of rarely diagnosed diseases, notable publications include:

A rare case of congenital mesoblastic nephroma (classic type) in the left kidney of an 11-month-old infant.

A case of gingival metastasis from colorectal carcinoma, describing a poorly recognized phenotypic transformation from adenocarcinoma to neuroendocrine carcinoma at this anatomical site.

A case of cervical mucocele (ranula), clinically mimicking a median cyst.

In the field of experimental pathology, studies have been conducted on the effects of vitamin K in experimental animals, observing morphological changes in internal organs. These contributions are of scientific and practical significance, such as determining the safe dose of Warfarin and Vitamin K1 that induces Vitamin K deficiency in experimental animals without causing fatal hemorrhages.

Regarding adipose tissue pathology, research findings of scientific and practical relevance include a histological analysis of changes in white and brown adipose tissue under chronic cold exposure, providing new insights into contemporary adipobiology.

Significant contributions have been made in the field of head and neck tumors, highlighting the prevalence of primary and metastatic intracranial tumors and a detailed study on glioblastomas in 41 patients. This study includes a statistical analysis of the correlation between the mean Ki-67 proliferative marker expression, tumor differentiation grade, and patient survival in a retrospective cohort.

In the domain of molecular mechanisms of carcinogenesis, particular attention is given to a study on the transmembrane protein tetraspanin CD151, which is relatively underexplored. The article provides a detailed overview of its structure, interactions with other proteins, and the mechanisms through which it contributes to carcinogenesis.

The infectious pathology section includes a histological study of lung tissue changes in COVID-19 infection, aimed at better understanding the virus's impact on the human body and identifying potential long-term complications. This work represents a scientific and practical contribution to the field.

IV. Evaluation of Dr. Martina Stoeva's Teaching Activities

Dr. Stoeva has been involved in academic teaching for over 7 years. As a part-time assistant (3 academic years), she had 80-280 hours per year, and as a full-time assistant and chief assistant, 266-434 hours per year, exceeding the university's required 220 hours.

She teaches Pathology in Bulgarian and English to students in Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, and Medical Laboratory Assistance.

In 2022, she was certified as an academic lecturer.

She is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Association and the Bulgarian Society of Pathology.

Conclusion

Dr. Martina Stoeva's career development, scientific indicators, PhD degree, and research activities fully comply with the requirements of the Bulgarian Law on Academic Staff Development and the regulations of the Medical University – Varna for the position of Associate Professor.

Therefore, I declare that I will vote positively for granting Dr. Martina Stoeva, MD, the academic title of Associate Professor and strongly recommend that the esteemed scientific jury support her candidacy.

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

22.02.2025

Prof. Dr. V. Belovezhdov, MD

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