

REVIEW by
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Regarding the order of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" No. R-109-444/05.12.2024 for inclusion in the scientific jury for the title of "Associate Professor" in the scientific field 3. social, economic and legal sciences, specialty 3.2. Psychology (Department of Medical Psychology), advertised by the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov", Varna in the State Gazette No. 85 of 08.10.2024 - one position, 0.5 full-time positions for the Department of "Healthcare" Veliko Tarnovo Branch and 1 full-time position for the Fourth Clinic of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University Hospital "St. Marina" EAD.

from

Senior Assistant Veronika Andreeva Ivanova, D.Ps.
Lecturer at the Medical University – Varna, participant in the competition

Varna 2025

1. General presentation of the materials received as part of the competition

The current competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. social, economic and legal sciences, specialty 3.2. psychology (scientific specialty "Psychology") was organised by the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" Medical University, Varna in the State Gazette No. 85 of 08.10.2024 - one position, 0.5 full-time positions for the Department of "Healthcare" Veliko Tarnovo Branch and 1 full-time position for the Fourth Clinic of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University Hospital "St. Marina" EAD.

The only candidate who applied for the competition was Senior Asst. Veronika Andreeva Ivanova from the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov", Varna.

The submitted documents meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for the exercise of the academic position of "Associate Professor" and the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff of the Medical University - Varna.

The description of the scientific work of Senior Asst. Veronika Andreeva Ivanova was prepared on the basis of the data submitted by the candidate for the academic position of "associate professor".

The scientific works submitted for the competition are outside the works specified in the summary of the dissertation for the award of the pedagogical and scientific degree "Doctor". The extended reference for publication activity includes 1 monograph and 28 articles and reports, independent and co-authored.

In quantitative terms, according to Art. 2b of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff of the Medical University of Varna, the candidate's publications exceed the minimum legal requirements.

1. Monograph on the quality of the habilitation thesis:

Ivanova, V. "Family psychodynamics and adolescence. An attempt to understand the teenager", ISBN 978-619-7503-11-1 , Varna, 2020, 140 pages (without reviews and references).

2. Articles and reports published in scientific publications that are referenced and indexed in globally recognised databases of scientific information – a total of 5 issues, including 2 independent and 3 co-authored.

3. Articles and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or in edited volumes – 20 issues, 8 of which are co-authored.

From the references for the citations given, it appears that Senior Asst. Veronika Ivanova, Ph.D., is developing as a scientist in the field of medical and clinical psychology both in our country and abroad.

From the scientific papers submitted for participation in the competition and the citations, it is evident that Senior Asst. Veronika Ivanova, Ph.D., fulfils the national minimum requirements for the academic position of "professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, specialty 3.2. psychology, in accordance with the Annex to Art. 1a, para. 1 of the Regulation on the Implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (New - SG, issue 56 of 2018, in force since 06.07.2018).

2. Details of the candidate

Veronika Ivanova has a Bachelor's degree in psychology, a Master's degree in Clinical psychology and a PhD in Medical psychology.

She has extensive experience as a lecturer in the field of higher education. She currently holds the academic position of "Chief Assistant" at the Medical University - Varna.

In 2005 she obtained a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, in 2007 a Master's degree in Clinical and Counselling Psychology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". She obtained a PhD in the scientific specialty 3.2 "Medical Psychology" at the Medical University - Varna.

From 2005 to 2009 she worked as a pedagogical counsellor - psychologist at the Primary School "Zahari Stoyanov" - Varna.

In 2010 she started her professional career at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna, at the same time she was appointed as a clinical psychologist at the University Hospital "St. Marina - Varna", where she still works today. Over the years, she has established herself as a leading specialist diagnostician in the field of clinical child psychology. Veronika Ivanova is a certified specialist in the field of child psychotherapy and holds a certificate of specialisation in clinical psychology.

From 2010 to 2017, she was an assistant professor of the specialty "Medical Psychology" at the Department of Healthcare - Veliko Tarnovo Branch, MU-Varna; and after obtaining the ONS "Doctor" from 2017 to 2024, she was a senior assistant professor of the specialty "Medical Psychology" at the Department of Healthcare - Veliko Tarnovo Branch, MU-Varna.

Actively participates in conducting exercises in Medical Psychology for Bulgarian and English-speaking students.

The presented reference establishes that Senior Asst. Veronika Andreeva Ivanova participates annually in international scientific and educational projects and forums.

She has completed specializations in essential problems in the field of clinical, child psychology and psychotherapy, supporting her professional activity as a teacher and researcher.

The educational profile and the professional experience gained as a teacher and clinical psychologist by Veronika Ivanova are consistent with the requirements for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" in the professional field 3.2. Psychology.

3. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific production.

The presented scientific works by Veronika Ivanova address issues of a theoretical, conceptual and research nature.

The main thematic areas of scientific research are in the field of clinical psychology, child diagnostics, and psychotherapy. The developed topics reflect the author's knowledge and creative searches for specific problems of health and illness. The choice of the problem shows knowledge of the field in which the candidate works.

The monographic work entitled "Family Psychodynamics and Adolescence. An Attempt to Understand the Teenager" is a bold but good attempt to examine a very difficult to study period of human development - adolescence. It is one of the turning points in the lives of most people. A period of change, of building a personality identity. It is itself characterized by dynamics, both in physical and mental development. Apparently, these facts motivate many practitioners and scientists to study various aspects of it.

The scientific problem related to the issues of diagnosis and therapy in adolescents is a very dynamically and quite often chaotically developing area in the field of psychological, medical, social and pedagogical sciences. The lack of systematicity still makes it undoubtedly relevant for specialists. Almost always, descriptive models of experiences and adolescent behavior dominate the explanation of the problem. Much rarer are the works related to work with adolescents, and even less so to psychological and psychotherapeutic work in a clinical environment. In this line of thought, still not going beyond the descriptive, Veronika Ivanova's work represents a new, original and synthesized knowledge that fills significant gaps in the issue.

Veronika Ivanova's work emphasizes showing the significance of both the so-called "psychological" and "psychodynamic model".

The strength of the work, in my opinion, lies in its significance in terms of guidelines for practical work with adolescents.

Veronika Ivanova compiles knowledge and shows the path of her long-standing and emotionally engaged therapeutic work with children and adolescents as a leading specialist in one of the two existing children's psychiatric clinics in Bulgaria – the clinic at the University Hospital "St. Marina" – Varna.

Veronika Ivanova chooses the psychodynamic and systemic model of examining the issue as the starting point of her work. While the psychodynamic model was clearly chosen because of its psychotherapeutic focus, the choice of the systemic model is logically justified by its nature and brings the much-needed scientificity to the monographic work.

The monograph proposes mainly qualitative methods for diagnosis, describes clinical cases, and presents a psychometric review of the shortened Beavers scale for family relations validated by the author for Bulgaria. The emphasis is placed on the counseling and psychotherapy of teenagers in a hospital environment.

The author's serious experience with projective methods in diagnostic, consultative and psychotherapeutic work with children who have experienced a psychotraumatic event is evident. The results of numerous clinical observations and psychotherapeutic interviews with adolescents are presented, which pose interesting questions to the reader.

Structured in four chapters and examining the author's perspective on the theoretical aspects of studying family dynamics in adolescence, psychotherapeutic diagnostics in adolescents, and psychotherapy and counseling of adolescents in a hospital setting, this monograph is a valuable read for specialists who have chosen as their vocation to work emotionally engaged and psychodynamically on the issues of adolescence.

The monograph is valuable because it shows the unique real personal stories and is a good example of self-reflection, self-criticism and professional ethics.

This monograph not only highlights one aspect of the problem, but also encourages reflection in this direction. The reader's reflection on the prospects for such developments is also an original moment for which I admire Veronika Ivanova.

The emerging contributions of a conceptual and practical-analytical nature go in the direction of the theoretical foundations for conducting counseling and psychotherapy in an institutional environment, the interrelations between family relationships and the emotional state of adolescents, the peculiarities of development in the period of adolescence, in health and illness.

The publications presented by Veronika Ivanova can be divided into 5 thematic areas.

In the first thematic area, publications are presented that deal with the study of the problems, phenomenology, diagnostics and symptoms of anxiety, stress and psychotrauma.

This area includes publications no. 4, 5, 20, 24, 25 from the list provided by the candidate.

Various aspects of childhood anxiety are examined. The psychometric characteristics of a scale for the study of behavioral anxiety are presented. The reactions of victims of prolonged captivity by pirates and victims of a train crash are examined. Conclusions are drawn about the differential diagnostic and clinical psychological work, counseling and therapy of people who have been in such situations.

The topic is of undiminished topicality. The publications devoted to the topic contain both theoretical analyzes and analyzes of the results of in-depth studies.

I consider the study of the possibilities of projective methods in children who have experienced psychotrauma to be an innovation in this field. The organization and study of the parameters of functioning in people under extreme conditions. The adaptation of methods for the study of anxiety in preschool children. Uncovering the specifics of diagnosing anxiety in preschool children.

The second subject area comprises research relating to work with children on the autistic spectrum (publ. nos. 3, 9, 14, 18, 23). Drawings of autistic children, the socio-communicative aspects of their development, the interaction with parents, the possibilities of psychotherapeutic work with children with autism were examined.

I associate the contribution of publications in this area with the conceptualization of a psychological model for studying the parameters of children with autism and the proposed counseling model for working with parents of children with autism.

This topic area is directly in line with the author's practice as a clinical child psychologist.

The third topic area is focused on psychological diagnosis, counseling, and psychotherapy of adolescents in the clinical setting (publ. nos. 1, 6, 11, 15). The possibilities of the short form of the MMPI personality questionnaire for adolescents in a clinical setting are presented.

Considerable attention is given to the influence of family dynamics in girls with anorexia.

Possible early predictors of pre-psychotic states in adolescents are examined. The possibilities for working with projective methods with psychotic adolescents are examined.

An important contribution with practical relevance is the diagnostic work and the special features that the author points out when working with adolescents.

The fourth topic area again relates to clinical diagnostics and reveals the author's profound knowledge in this area (publ. nos. 17, 21,). Here, the attitudes, experiences and various behavioral and social models of parents of children with developmental problems are examined. The papers relate to the development of a brief battery for intelligence testing in children with mental and behavioral disorders and the standardized norms for ages 12-14 when working with Raven's color progressive matrices for clinical samples.

The publications in the fifth direction are the most numerous and can be conditionally categorized in the field of psychotherapy and personality research (publ. nos. 2, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19).

The ability to establish therapeutic contact is examined. A comparative analysis of the process of group psychotherapy in low-functioning groups of mentally ill patients is presented. The author's scale for assessing the effectiveness of group psychotherapy in psychotic patients is presented.

The specifics of crisis counseling and psychotherapy for adolescents who have attempted suicide are examined. A model for group psychotherapy under inpatient conditions is developed.

The contributions outlined here relate to uncovering the factors of group dynamics in patients.

An attempt to uncover the experiences of mentally ill people during group psychotherapy in a hospital setting and the validation of a scale developed by the author to investigate the effectiveness of psychotherapy with mentally ill people.

The author's publications have made an important contribution to clarifying the characteristics of the whole hospital environment in the field of mental health and the relationships within this environment.

A very important impression is left by Veronika Ivanova's participation in interdisciplinary teams with doctors and clinicians. This enriches current knowledge and practice and helps to establish psychologists as members of teams as a whole.

4. General presentation of the candidate's scientific and applied scientific contributions

The contributions in the scientific work of Senior Asst. Veronika Ivanova, Ph.D. presented in the competition are systematically in the direction of formulating ideas and concepts, testing and implementing approaches to support and optimize the psychological and social functioning of children and adults in the field of mental health.

The following 3 main groups stand out as the most significant:

- The first relates to the conceptualization of theoretical models in the fields of medical and clinical psychology and their testing in practice.
- The second relates to the validation of methods and measurement procedures in the fields of child and adolescent psychology, medical psychology, clinical psychology and psychotherapy.
- The third area relates to the phenomenological clinical-psychological investigation of the symptoms of mental disorders and disorders in childhood and adolescence.

At the moment I have no information about any plagiarism by Senior Asst. Veronika Ivanova, D.Ps.

Conclusion

Senior Assoc. Prof. Veronika Ivanova, Ph.D., fulfils the national minimum requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor", Department 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Subject Area 3.2. Psychology (Specialty Medical Psychology), in accordance with the Annex to Art. 1a, para. 1 of the Regulation on the Implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the requirements of the Regulation on the Development of Academic Staff of the Medical University - Varna.

She has professional experience as a lecturer in the field of higher education and as an expert and clinician in the field of competition.

She offers a scientific production for review that contributes to the advisory, clinical and medical practise and exceeds the requirements.

She is recognisable as a scientist.

All this gives me reason to positively evaluate Senior Assoc. Prof. Veronika Ivanova, Ph.D., as a candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor".

I am of the opinion that the Scientific Jury, in accordance with the procedure applied at the Medical University - Varna, should nominate Senior Assoc. Prof. Veronika Ivanova, Ph.D., for

election to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3.
Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Department 3.2. Psychology.

11.02.2025 Reviewer:

Заличено на основание чл. 5,
§1, б. „В“ от Регламент (ЕС)
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Varna Prof. Ivan Alexandrov, Ph.D. DSc

Заличено на основание чл. 5,
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