

OPINION

by Prof. Silvia Borisova Tsvetkova, DCLinPsy

Medical University - Pleven

External member of the Scientific Jury designated by Order

№ P-109-444/05.12.2024

Subject: competition for the academic position of **Associate Professor** in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; professional field 3.2. Psychology; scientific specialty "**Medical Psychology**" for the needs of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov"-Varna. The competition was announced in State Gazette № 85/08.10.2024.

The only candidate is the Chief Assist. Veronika Andreeva Ivanova, PhD. All necessary documents have been submitted in accordance with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its Application and the Rules for the Development of Academic Staff at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna.

Education, qualification and professional development

In 2005 the candidate graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and in 2007 with a Master's degree in Clinical and Consultative Psychology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In the period 2012-2016, he was a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology at MU-Varna. He has a qualification and specialisation in Clinical Psychologist (MU-Varna) and an additional qualification in Psychotherapist.

He worked as a pedagogical counsellor-psychologist in the period 2005-2009 at the Primary school-Varna, 2008-2011 as a specialist at the UMHAT 'St. Marina'-Varna. From 2010 to 2017, he worked as a psychologist at the UMHAT 'St. Marina'-Varna (according to Certificate № 727/14.10.2024). From a career point of view, Chief Assist. Veronika Ivanova has been developing since 6 April 2017 and holds the position of psychologist, chief assistant at 0.5 position at the University Hospital "St. Marina"-Varna. According to Certificate № 727/14.10.2024 issued by the UMHAT 'St. Marina' had an internship as a psychologist for 14 years and 4 months.

Her academic development began in 2010. In 2017 she was appointed assistant professor in Medical Psychology at the Department of Health Care, Veliko Tarnovo Branch of MU-Varna. Since 2017 he has been a senior assistant to the same structure.

Chief Assist. Ivanova leads classes in the disciplines of Medical Psychology, Child and Adolescent Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Psychology at Health care

management and Developmental Psychology in the period 2019-2024 at the Department of Health Care, Branch V. Tarnovo. In addition to Bulgarian students, she also conducts exercises for English-language students. He is fluent in English and Spanish.

Research

For the contest, Chief Assist. Ivanova participated with a dissertation for the award of Sciences "Doctor", a monograph "Family Psychodynamics and Adolescence. An attempt to understand the teenager" and 25 publications – articles and reports. Of the materials provided, 5 are publications in refereed editions (D6), in 3 of which Chief Assist. V. Ivanova is the first author and 20 issues have been published in unrefereed journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes (G7.). In 12 (60%) of them is the only author.

According to the submitted scientific data with the attached evidence materials, the total number of points under Indicator D.4-10 is 240.25 points with a minimum requirement of 200 points.

The total number of citations of the scientific production of Chief Assist. Ivanova is 5, of which 3 citations are referenced and indexed publications in world-famous databases of scientific information, one in a chapter of a monograph and unrefereed journals with scientific review. The total number of points from the citations reflecting the scientific activity of the candidate is 60 (with minimum requirements of 50 points).

The fact that the scientific output provided by the Publishing Department at MU-Varna is similar shows that the percentages of similarity are low, which treats the publication activity of the candidate as original and innovative.

Chief Assist. V. Ivanova has participated in 13 scientific forums in the country and 4 abroad.

The ***presented monograph*** "Family Psychodynamics and Adolescence. An Attempt to Understand the Teenager" was published in 2020 at the Medical University-Varna Information Centre and, as required, has been peer-reviewed by two habilitated individuals, with the reviews being part of the content. There is a wealth of literature from 226 sources. Habilitation work is dedicated to the most dynamic and complex age period – adolescence. It contains an introduction and four separate chapters: Theoretical aspects in the study of family dynamics in adolescence; Methods of research; Psychotherapeutic functional diagnosis in adolescents; Psychotherapy and counseling of adolescents in a hospital environment. Descriptively are deduced characteristics of the age norm according to different authors and on this basis are revealed the specifics in the presence of mental disorders / psychopathology during adolescence. The theoretical block combines the psychodynamic, psychoanalytic and systemic approaches, which serve as a conceptual framework for the analysis of

empirical data (chapters three and four). The subtitle "Family dynamics in various psychopathological manifestations" presents in detail 11 cases from the practice of Chief Assist. V. Ivanova as a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist at the Children's Psychiatric Clinic of the UMHAT "St. Marina".

The author shows very good skills for selection of corresponding and approbated methodologies for psychodiagnosis and consultative-therapeutic work. A total of 171 persons were described, 48 of whom underwent a re-test procedure using the SFI methodology. The subject of the study is teenagers and their parents. The following were used: CAT – a projective graphical methodology for children, on the basis of which the semi-projective SATO methodology *is generated*, the Thematic Aperceptive Test (TAT), Tell me a story/ TEMAS Tell-Me-A-Story (Temas Non Minority Clinical Version), drawing methodologies and Metaphorical Associative Cards (MAC).

The SFI (Self-Report Family Inventory: Version II, created by R. Beavers, is being validated, highlighting the innovative nature of the monograph work. The author points out as an objective limitation the lack of norms from studies of families with different structures, which is overcome by the personal application of the tool, the *aythems* of which have been proven to be of very good consistency (α Cronbach = .794).

Chapter Three "Psychotherapeutic, functional personality diagnosis in adolescents" highlights the significant place of psychodiagnosis in the overall process, from the initial meeting to psychotherapeutic overcoming of the effects of the psychotraumatic event. In the chapter, the author again uses cases from her own clinical practice to illustrate the described typology of adolescence in psychotherapeutic diagnosis.

A special place in the fourth chapter "Consultation and psychotherapy of teenagers in a hospital setting" is devoted to psychotherapy in adolescents at the borderline level of functioning, followed by institutional psychotherapy with adolescents at the psychotic level of functioning, adolescents with psychosis and with suicide, supported by extensive case studies. A number of methods of psychotherapy from the field of psychoanalytic, psychodynamic and system-structural paradigm are discussed, which give a rich toolkit for choosing a psychotherapeutic program for each poet's case.

The scientific output provided is divided into five thematic areas.

The first area is related to the study of problems, diagnosis and symptoms of anxiety, stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychotrauma in children and adults. Includes publications №4, 5, 20, 24, 25. Material № 24 ("Psychometric Characteristics of a Behavioral Anxiety Scale in Preschool Age") presents an author's Behavioral Anxiety Scale.

The second thematic area brings together publications related to work with children on the autism spectrum. Contains research and clinical observations, interviews with parents of children with autism (№ 3, 9, 14, 18, 23). Drawings focused on body image, social and communicative development, interaction with parents and the possibilities of psychotherapeutic work with such children are analyzed.

The third area relates to psychodiagnostics, counseling and psychotherapy of hospitalized adolescents (№1, 6, 11, 15). The possibilities of the short version of the MMPI questionnaire for personality research among 230 young people are examined. The impact of family dynamics in cases of anorexia nervosa is analyzed, as well as predictors of the occurrence of psychopathological conditions in adolescents. The possibilities for working with the projective methodology TAT in adolescents with psychosis are studied.

Publications № 2, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 19 in the field of psychotherapy and personality research are covered in *the fourth field*. The relationship between the personality type and the communication style of future medics for the development of skills for creating therapeutic contact is studied (2, 16). A comparative analysis of the process of group psychotherapy in low-functioning groups and in psychotic patients is made (8). Bulgarian folk tales about working with girls who have experienced violence have been skillfully used in the psychotherapeutic process (7). An author's scale for assessing the effectiveness of group psychotherapy in psychotic patients (10,12) was approbated. The specifics of crisis counseling and psychotherapy in adolescents with suicidal risk are studied (13). A model for group psychotherapy in clinical settings was developed (19).

Publications in *the fifth field* are devoted to issues of child clinical psychology and psychodiagnostics (№17, 21, 22, 23). An overview of some of the modern clinical tests for the diagnosis of intelligence is presented (publications studied using Raven's color matrices among 104 children in source №17 and 489 children in source №21). Publication №22 examines attitudes, experiences, behavioral and social models in families raising a child with developmental problems. Publication №22 addresses some contemporary aspects of autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Full-text publications in scientific journals and collections, beyond the minimum science-metric requirements are №26, 27 and 28.

Main scientific contributions

The contribution points of the scientific output provided are:

- The problems of adolescence in norm and pathology are examined in detail on the basis of three main conceptual approaches (psychoanalytic, psychodynamic and system-structural).
- The author's SFI (Self-Report Family Inventory) is used to study family relationships, the basis of the Beavers model, validated by the Chief Assist. Ivanova and team for Bulgarian conditions.

- Theoretical and practical grounds for selection of methods of psychodiagnosis, as well as for conducting consultative and psychotherapeutic work in a clinical environment are outlined.
- A short battery for intelligence research in children with psychiatric and behavioural disorders has been developed – clinical sample.
- Standardized norms for the age of 12-14 years are derived when working with Raven's color progressive matrices.
- The possibilities of projective methods for studying the personality of adolescents in the absence and in the presence of a psychiatric problem and early psychotrauma are presented.
- The opportunities for using Bulgarian folk tales in working with young women and girls who have experienced violence are presented.
- Based on a number of practical cases from personal clinical experience and very good theoretical training, an analysis of the factors influencing group dynamics and the experiences of hospitalized adolescents in low- and high-functioning groups in the conditions of group psychotherapy was carried out. An author's scale for measuring the effectiveness of psychotherapy in psychotic adolescents was approbated.

CONCLUSION

Based on the materials submitted for the competition, I consider that the candidate meets the conditions for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor in accordance with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its Application and the Rules for the Development of Academic Staff of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov" - Varna.

The timeliness of the submitted works, the innovative scientific contributions, the precision and responsibility in the realization of her professional and teaching activities are grounds for a **positive assessment** and I propose to the members of the Scientific Jury to award the academic position "**Associate Professor**" in Medical Psychology to **Chief Assist. Veronika Andreeva Ivanova, PhD** in field of higher education 3.Social, economic and legal sciences; professional field 3.2. Psychology for the needs of the Medical University 'Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov', Varna, Branch V. Tarnovo, Department of Health Care and for the needs of the Fourth Clinic of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University Hospital "St. Marina" EAD-Varna.

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

Pleven

5.02.2025

Prepared the opinion:

(Prof. Silvia Tsvetkova, DCLinPsy)