

REVIEW

By Prof. Dr. Nikola Kolev, MD, Medical University of Varna, elected as a reviewer by decision of the Faculty Council of 10.09.2025, protocol N 45, in connection with a competition for the position of Professor, announced in the State Gazette, issue 64 of 05.08.2025, with the only candidate admitted to participate, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veselin Marinov, MD, in the field of higher education 7.1 "Medicine". Specialty "Surgery"

Biographical data for the candidate.

Assoc. Prof. Marinov was born on 29.03.1973 in Sofia. He completed his high school education at the First High School in Sofia with teaching in English. He applied and was accepted to Medicine, graduating from the Medical University of Sofia in 1997 with excellent results. He specialized in surgery at the 3rd Surgical Clinic of the Pirogov Medical and Surgical Hospital. He obtained his specialty in 2003. Between 2003 and 2005 he worked at the Lozenets University Hospital. For a period of one year he specialized in hepatobiliary, pancreatic and transplant surgery in the city of Essen, Germany. After his return, he started working at the Tokuda Medical Center. In 2012 he defended his dissertation on the topic "Study on the surgical treatment of chronic pancreatitis and its complications". Subsequently, he held the position of Chief Assistant at AD.

Since 2019, he has been an Associate Professor at the Department of General and Operative Surgery of the Medical University of Varna. In 2024, he defended his dissertation on the topic "Effectiveness and safety of laparoscopic colorectal resections. Comparative analysis of results with open surgery. Risk assessment and methods for reducing perioperative complications" and acquired the title of Doctor of Sciences. He currently holds the position of Head of the Department of Minimally Invasive and Laparoscopic Surgery and is Deputy Medical Director of Acibadem City Clinic, University Hospital "Tokuda" EAD.

Scientific research activity of the candidate

In this competition, Assoc. Prof. Marinov presents the following scientific production:

- Dissertation for the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor"
- Habilitation work - monograph on the topic: "Surgical treatment of hiatal hernias and GERD", published in 2025.
- Full-text publications published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in global databases with scientific information - 9 after awarding the ONS "Doctor of Sciences"
- Publications and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective forums - 25
- Dissertation for the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor of Sciences"
- List of citations - 15
- Personal impact factor - IF - 7.5 after taking the AD "Associate Professor".

Regarding the minimum national requirements for acquiring the academic position of "Professor" according to the Law on the State Academic Staff of the Republic of

Bulgaria and its regulations for application at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" Varna, the candidate Assoc. Prof. Marinov has presented the following reference:

1. By indicators group A - 50t out of the required 50t
2. By indicators group B - 100t
3. By indicators group C - 100t out of the required 100t
4. By indicators group D - 254.14t out of the required 200t
5. By indicators group E - 150t out of the required 100t
6. By indicators group E - 150t out of the required 100t

The data show that the minimum criteria according to the Law on the State Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria are met and with regard to indicators in groups D, E, E they even exceed the required ones. Moreover, the candidate has defended a dissertation for the award of the National Academic Degree "Doctor of Sciences".

Educational and teaching activities

After taking up the position of Chief Assistant, Assoc. Prof. Marinov began to supervise practical exercises for 3rd, 4th, and 5th year medical students at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University of Medicine and Pharmacy, as well as for interns. A report with a cumulative teaching time of 581 hours is presented. He is the head of the specialization of two surgical specialists with a workload of 1620 equivalent hours. He is the scientific supervisor of two doctoral students at the Medical University of Varna, one of whom has successfully defended his dissertation. He was a member of the state examination committee at the Military Medical Academy Sofia for 2 years for acquiring a specialty in surgery. He has 20 hours of lecture course per year.

Continuing qualification

From the submitted reference and the attached documents, it is evident that after 2019, when he held the position of Associate Professor, the candidate has participated in 13 congresses and conferences on surgery in Bulgaria and abroad, and in most of them he participated with lecture presentations. 26 certificates of participation in training seminars, training and certification courses have been presented. He holds certificates for laparoscopic surgery, hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery, abdominal ultrasound, Da Vinci robotic surgery. He has presented diplomas from training abroad in the field of laparoscopic colorectal surgery, laparoscopic pancreatic surgery, minimally invasive liver surgery. Several diplomas from training courses in bariatric and metabolic surgery, thyroid surgery, minimally invasive surgery of abdominal wall hernias.

He is a member of BHD, BAHGO, BAMIRH, IFSO, EAES. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Bulgarian Academy of Medical Sciences.

A diploma for completing a master's degree in the professional field of "Public Administration, Health Management" is presented.

Main directions of the candidate's scientific activity.

It is evident that the candidate's interests are in the field of minimally invasive and robotic, colorectal, hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery, gastric surgery, hiatal hernias and GERD. The following directions can be identified:

1. Minimally invasive approach in colorectal surgery
2. Modern treatment of hiatal hernias and GERD
3. Surgery for oncological diseases of the pancreas and stomach
4. Robotic surgery of the stomach, esophagus and rectum

A major place in the scientific research activity of Assoc. Prof. Marinov is occupied by the topic of the minimally invasive approach in the treatment of colorectal surgical diseases. Based on evidence in the literature and personal experience, guidelines for dissection techniques in the laparoscopic approach in the treatment of colorectal cancer have been developed. The levels of lymphadenectomy have been defined. The main emphasis is on determining the level of ligation of the lower mesenteric vessels in different localizations of left-sided cancer of the colon and rectum, mobilization of the left flexure of the colon and protective ileostomy to reduce the level of insufficiency. Methods for accelerated recovery of patients after laparoscopic colorectal resections are defined. A comparative analysis of the perioperative results with open surgery has been performed and the benefits of the minimally invasive approach have been proven. The topic is developed in detail in the dissertation. The topic of minimally invasive colorectal surgery is also present in publications and reports from participation in recent scientific forums in Bulgaria.

Another direction in the candidate's research activity is the minimally invasive surgical treatment of hiatal hernias and GERD. The topic is particularly relevant in light of the increasing frequency of these diseases. The diagnostic algorithm is systematized, and modern achievements in the diagnosis of these diseases are reviewed. The monograph describes modern surgical approaches in the treatment of GERD and hiatal hernias. Stepwise dissection approaches and surgical techniques associated with obtaining the best results in the course of an individual approach to patients are described.

The presented publications highlight shared experience in the treatment of locally advanced gastric cancer, extremely rich experience in robotic and laparoscopic surgery for esophageal and cardia cancer, minimally invasive treatment of ventral hernias, and surgery for pancreatic cancer.

Regarding practical work, Assoc. Prof. Marinov provides a list of 918 operations performed over a period of 2 years. The surgical interventions are in all areas of abdominal, visceral surgery, thyroid surgery, hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgery, with minimally invasive operations prevailing – laparoscopic and robotic. The same reference proves the candidate's extensive practical experience.

Scientific and practical contributions

Considering the scientific production provided, the scientific and practical contributions that can be derived after taking up the title of Associate Professor are related to the defended dissertation, monographic work and publications in international and national journals.

I agree with the derived contributions from the dissertation work for the acquisition of the degree of Doctor of Sciences, namely:

An ambitious study was conducted, based on personal experience on 285 patients with colorectal resections and a comparative analysis by groups of patients with open, laparoscopic resections and conversions. Mechanical bowel preparation in combination with intravenous broad-spectrum antibiotic prophylaxis has been established in the practice of laparoscopic resections. Rules for accelerated recovery of patients have been developed. Criteria for preoperative assessment of the risk of conversion have been defined and recommendations for behavior have been derived. The sensitivity and specificity of contrast-enhanced CT for assessing local disease status were investigated. Recommendations for the volume of lymphadenectomy for different locations of CRC were defined, as well as methods for reducing the risk of anastomotic leaks after left-sided resections. The influence of surgeon experience on perioperative outcomes in patients with laparoscopic colorectal resections was investigated.

Scientific contributions related to the monographic work on the topic "Surgical lesion in hiatal hernias and GERD"

- The monographic work in a synthesized form examines the modern understanding and guidelines in the etiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis and treatment of hiatal hernias and GERD
- The monograph itself is structured as a teaching aid and can serve to prepare surgical residents
- It is based on personal experience of over 300 operations performed by the candidate

Contributions related to publications in global databases after taking up the position of Associate Professor with a personal IF – 7.5

- Results of a single-center study on patients with locally advanced gastric cancer are presented
- A rare case of a patient with pancreatic IPMN and two-stage surgery is reported
- Laparoscopic methods for the treatment of ventral hernias have been established in practice and comparative results with open surgery have been studied
- 3 cases of patients with rare conditions requiring surgical treatment have been reported
- Experience in the treatment of locally advanced CRC has been analyzed

Scientific contributions related to publications in non-refereed journals: Good clinical practice rules have been prepared based on the recommendations in the world literature for the management of patients after laparoscopic biliary tract surgeries. The same rules have been adopted as a consensus statement at a meeting of the Bulgarian Society of Gastroenterology. Experience in robotic and laparoscopic colorectal surgery has been shared. Results from personal experience in the treatment of patients with hiatal hernias and GERD have been reported, and a stepwise approach has been defined. Results from resection surgery in oncological diseases of the pancreas and stomach have been shared.

Conclusion

From the submitted documents it is clear that the candidate's scientometric indicators meet the requirements of the ZRASRB and the regulations for its application at the Medical University of Varna. Assoc. Prof. Marinov has a defended dissertation and was awarded the National Council "Doctor of Sciences". He is a practicing surgeon with extensive clinical practice, confirming modern trends in the development of minimally invasive approaches in surgery of the colon, stomach, pancreas and liver. The candidate is a proven specialist in the field of abdominal surgery and recognizable in the Bulgarian surgical community. Meets all requirements for holding the title of Professor in

IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION 7. HEALTH AND SPORTS, PROFESSIONAL DIRECTION 7.1 MEDICINE, IN THE SCIENTIFIC SPECIALTY "GENERAL SURGERY" FOR THE NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL AND OPERATIVE SURGERY UNDER HIS "PROF. DR. PARASKEV STOYANOV" VARNA.

Based on the submitted documents and my personal impressions, I confidently vote FOR awarding the title of Professor to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veselin Marinov and I invite the esteemed members of the scientific jury to vote positively.

03.11.2025

Prof. Dr. Nikola Kolev, DSc

Varna