

STATEMENT

By **Prof. Sonya Koleva Toncheva, PhD, DSc**

Deputy Director of the Shumen Affiliate, Medical University – Varna

Regarding: The procedure for holding the academic position of **Associate Professor** in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional area 7.1. **Medicine**, scientific speciality **Obstetrics and Gynaecology**, open for the needs of the Department of Healthcare, Shumen Affiliate, MU-Varna, announced by MU-Varna in the State Gazette No. 102 of 28.11.2025.

There is a single candidate in the current procedure – Yonka Ivanova Kornovska, MD, PhD, Ch. Assist. Prof. at the Department of Healthcare – Shumen Affiliate, Medical University "Prof. Paraskev Stoyanov", Varna. The procedure complies with the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (of 19/07/2022) and the Rules and Regulations for Academic Staff Development (of 27/05/2025) at MU-Varna. By Order No. R-109-69/28.01.2026 of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna, I have been appointed as a Member of the Scientific Jury. At the first session of the Scientific Jury held in absentia, I was elected Chairman and tasked to prepare a statement on the procedure for acquiring the academic position of Associate Professor.

The candidate has submitted all required documents in proper order, in accordance with the requirements of ADASRB and the Rules and Regulations for Academic Staff Development at MU-Varna.

I. Brief Background of the Candidate

In 1999, Ch. Asst. Prof. Y. Kornovska, MD, graduated as a Master of Medicine (MMed) from the Higher Medical Institute in Pleven. In 2000–2004, she worked as a resident physician in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the same institution. In 2005, she obtained her Certificate of Completion of Special Training (CCST) in Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Reproductive Medicine. From 2004 to 2005, she worked as a physician in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Maichin Dom Medical Complex – Varna. For the following 15 years (until 2020), she served as a Senior Medical Representative and Regional Coordinator at Pfizer, Sanofi-Aventis Bulgaria Ltd., and Novartis Pharma Services. Since 2020 to the present,

she has been working as a physician, obstetrician-gynaecologist in the Gynaecology Clinic at St. Anna Hospital – Varna. Since 2015, she has also been working at the Women's Health Centre "Prof. Yavor Kornovski". During the 2020/2021 academic year, she was invited as a part-time assistant professor, and from 2021, following a competition, she became a full-time assistant professor at the Department of Healthcare at the Shumen Affiliate of MU-Varna. In 2022, she defended her doctoral (PhD) thesis in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at MU-Pleven. Following her PhD degree, Dr. Kornovska won a competition and assumed the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor, continuing her career at the same department from 2023 to the present.

As evidenced by the submitted records, Ch. Asst. Prof. Y. Kornovska continuously enhances her qualifications. She has acquired additional qualifications, including: colposcopy courses Level I and II, hysteroscopy courses Level I and II, laparoscopy courses Level I and II, and an ultrasound course in obstetrics and gynaecology.

The candidate has a working knowledge of written and spoken English.

II. Assessment of the Candidate's Research and Scientific Output

Dr. Kornovska, PhD, has presented an impressive scientific output of 144 works/releases: 81 publications and 63 participations at national scientific forums. For the present competition, she has used **38 full-text papers**.

Distribution of scientific output:

- 11 – in foreign peer-reviewed (indexed) journals, equivalent to cumulative habilitation;
- 10 – in foreign peer-reviewed (indexed) journals;
- 16 – in Bulgarian non-peer-reviewed journals;
- 1 – additional publication in an indexed journal, beyond the minimum requirements

The number of points from the submitted publications meets and significantly exceeds the minimum requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its application, as well as the internal scientometric requirements of MU-Varna.

Contributions related to the main areas of research:

The candidate's research and applied scientific activities, as well as her research interests, are focused on 4 main scientific areas within the speciality of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

AREA 1: Anatomical considerations and surgical techniques in operative gynaecology.

The contributions in this field can be characterised as original (G8 No. 3), applied (B4: No. 1, 2, 4), and methodological (B4 No. 3; G7: No. 9; G8: No. 13).

AREA 2: ERAS (Enhanced Recovery After Surgery) and prehabilitation. This is a new area in perioperative patient care that is increasingly adopted worldwide across an increasing number of surgical specialities. The contributions in this field are original (G8: No. 8, 9), as the team was the first in the country to apply ERAS protocols; applied (G8: No. 8, 9) – demonstrating the applicability of this set of protocols in everyday operative gynaecology; and methodological (G8: No. 2, 4, 10, 12, 14).

AREA 3: Erbium lasers in gynaecology. The introduction of the erbium laser marks a revolution in the treatment of stress incontinence and genitourinary syndrome in menopause, both of which impact patients' quality of life. The contributions in this area are original (G8: No. 5, 11), applied (G8: No. 5, 11), and methodological (G8: No. 1).

AREA 4: Gynecologic oncology. In this field, Chief Asst. Kornovska, MD, addresses two sub-topics:

- *Oncological diseases and reproduction;*
- *Rare tumours and rare clinical cases.*

The combination of pregnancy and malignant diseases presents a therapeutic challenge and is a multidisciplinary issue for a wide range of specialists, including obstetrician-gynaecologists, gynaecologic oncologists, and others. Important contributions of an applied nature have been made in this scientific field (G7: No. 2, 3, 5).

The 4 rare clinical cases described in this area, some of which have only isolated publications in the world literature, present very rare tumours (B4: No. 5, 6, 7, 8) that are also significantly more malignant, with a faster-progressing and atypical clinical presentation. This makes their publication in the literature exceptionally valuable for clinical practice.

The contributions of Y. Kornovska, MD, PhD, stand out particularly in two areas: ERAS (Enhanced Recovery After Surgery) and prehabilitation, and Erbium lasers in gynaecology. In these fields, her contributions are not only original. She is a pioneer in introducing them into clinical practice in Bulgaria.

A testament to the scientific value of the candidate's publications is their citation record: to date, according to Google Scholar, her scientific works have been cited 281 times. Dr. Yonka Kornovska's papers have a cumulative impact factor of 112.3, which is also an excellent indicator of the value of her research output.

The h-index (Hirsch index) has been established in the academic community as an objective measure of the scientific merit of an individual's body of work, taking into account both the number of publications and their citations. According to Google Scholar data, Dr. Yonka Kornovska's publications have an **h-index = 11**.

III. Assessment of the Candidate's Academic Activity and Clinical-Diagnostic Practice

- **Academic activities**

Dr. Kornovska's academic career has progressed through all stages of the academic ladder at the Department of Healthcare, Shumen Affiliate, MU-Varna. She started as a part-time assistant professor in the 2020/21 academic year. In the 2021/22 academic year, following a competition, she became an Assistant Professor. In 2022, she successfully defended her doctoral PhD thesis on: **Treatment of Cervical Precancerous Lesions by Large Loop Excision (LLETZ) in an Outpatient Setting**. From 2023 to the present, spanning 3 academic years, she has held the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor following a successful competition. As of 15/12/2025, the submitted record shows a total teaching experience of 4 years, 2 months, and 25 days. Her teaching workload meets and exceeds the requirements of the present procedure. Her academic-related tasks include practical exercises in Gynaecology and Obstetrics, as well as participation in examination boards for mid-term and final state examinations. In her teaching, Dr. Kornovska is recognised for her distinctive approach – the information she conveys is filtered through the lens of everyday clinical practice. In her interactions with students, she is empathetic and dedicated, for which she receives respect and appreciation.

- **Clinical and diagnostic practice**

According to the official report submitted for the past 3 years, Dr. Kornovska, PhD, has independently performed 259 surgical interventions of varying complexity in the field of operative gynaecology. In addition, to enhance her qualifications and acquire additional skills, she has completed courses in colposcopy – Levels I and II, hysteroscopy – Levels I and II, laparoscopy – Levels I and II, and ultrasound in obstetrics and gynaecology.

I feel compelled to share a few **personal impressions**. I have known Dr. Kornovska for more than 4 years, since she started as a part-time assistant professor at the Department of Healthcare at the Shumen Affiliate. Open in nature, communicative, driven, and consistent in her actions, she has established herself as a respected colleague and lecturer. She possesses excellent teamwork skills, always ready to provide assistance and professional support. She is remarkably well-meaning in both her personal and professional commitments. I highly value her extraordinary professional discipline as an educator, her work ethic, thoroughness, and research precision.

Ch. Asst. Prof. Y. Kornovska participates in the organisational and administrative activities of the Department of Healthcare, as well as in team events, celebrations, and holidays at the Shumen Affiliate.

IV. Conclusion:

Based on fulfilling the minimum scientometric requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for Academic Staff Development at MU-Varna, the submitted research publications, and the academic and professional experience presented, I am convinced in my positive vote. I confidently propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury that Yonka Ivanova Kornovska, MD, PhD, be appointed to the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional area 7.1. Medicine, scientific speciality Obstetrics and Gynaecology, open for the needs of the Department of Healthcare, Shumen Affiliate, Medical University of Varna.

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