

To
The Chairperson of the Scientific Jury,
appointed by Order No. P-109-264/30.07.2026
of the Rector of Medical University

Attached herewith is an **EXPERT OPINION**
regarding the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor"
in the scientific specialty "Periodontology and Oral Mucosa Diseases"
announced for the needs of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" –
Varna, Department of Periodontology and Dental Implantology
in the State Gazette, Issue No. 50/02.06.2026.

Expert opinion by: Assoc. Prof. Kamen Georgiev Kotsilkov, PhD
Professional Field 7.2: Dental Medicine
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EXPERT OPINION

BY

ASSOC. PROF. DR. KAMEN GEORGIEV KOTSILKOV, PHD

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ON

**THE COMPETITION FOR THE ACADEMIC POSITION OF "ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR" AT MU-VARNA**

In the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor," there is a single candidate:

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Tsvetalina Ivanova Gerova-Vatsova, PhD

I. Analysis of the Candidate's Career Profile

Dr. Tsvetalina Ivanova Gerova-Vatsova was born on February 21, 1992, in the town of Novi Pazar. In 2017, she graduated from the Faculty of Dental Medicine at Medical University – Varna, acquiring a Master's degree and the professional qualification of "Master of Dental Medicine." From 2019 to 2023, she was a full-time PhD student at the Department of Periodontology and Dental Implantology in the scientific specialty "Therapeutic Dentistry," earning her PhD degree with a dissertation titled *"Investigation of the Results from the Application of Autologous Platelet-Rich Plasma in the Regenerative Therapy of Vertical Bone Defects."* Effective June 1, 2023, she was recognized as a specialist in "Periodontology and Oral Mucosa Diseases" (Certificate of Recognized Specialty, Series MUV 2023, Reg. No. 026588, dated August 8, 2023).

Her professional journey began in September 2016 as a dentist at "Denta Protect" EOOD in Varna. Her academic career has taken place entirely within the Department of Periodontology and Dental Implantology at the FDM of MU-Varna: serving as an assistant professor from October 5, 2017, to May 14, 2024, and as a chief assistant professor from May 14, 2024, to the present. In 2023 and 2024, she also served as an administrative assistant for the department.

According to Certificate No. 099-1952 and Certificate No. 099-1953 issued by MU-Varna on June 8, 2026, as of June 8, 2026, the candidate has:

- **Teaching experience:** 8 years, 8 months, and 3 days;
- **Professional experience in Dental Medicine:** 8 years, 10 months, and 20 days.

Based on these indicators, the candidate meets the requirements of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of MU-Varna for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor."

The submitted list demonstrates participation in over 20 national and international scientific events, including the international symposia "Sofia Dental Meeting," the annual assemblies of IMAB, the forums "Varna Dent," "BULPERIO," and "Periodontology and Friends," as well as theoretical and practical courses in periodontal surgery, dental implantology, and the application of lasers in dentistry. These participations are certified by official certificates.

She is proficient in English.

II. General Description of the Submitted Competition Materials

The documents submitted for review are complete in volume and comply in form, content, and compilation with the requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" at MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov," Varna. They correspond to the minimum national requirements for scientific and teaching activities pursuant to the Annex to Art. 1a, para. 1 of the Regulations for the Application of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (RPLDASRB) for Higher Education Area 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.2. Dental Medicine, as well as the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of MU-Varna.

The scientometric indicators are certified by Academic Reference for Publications, Citations, and Scientific Profiles No. 1179, dated June 24, 2026, issued by the Library of MU-Varna. Its conclusion reflects full coverage across indicator groups B3, B4, G5 to G9, and D10 to D12.

III. General Assessment of the Candidate's Overall Academic Development

Indicator Group A: Dissertation Work

The candidate acquired the educational and scientific degree "PhD" after defending a dissertation titled *"Investigation of the Results from the Application of Autologous Platelet-Rich Plasma in the Regenerative Therapy of Vertical Bone Defects."* The dissertation laid the foundation for the candidate's subsequent research focus: the regenerative treatment of vertical bone defects. It represents the first domestic study on the efficacy of standalone autologous platelet-rich plasma (PRP) application in such defects, comparing clinical and CBCT results across different regenerative protocols. Under Indicator A1, the candidate fulfills the required 50 points.

Indicator Group B: Habilitation Work, Monograph

The candidate presents the monograph *"Regenerative Periodontal Therapy"* (Medical University, Varna, 2025, ISBN 978-619-221-542-2) as her habilitation work, spanning 190 pages with Prof. Dr. Stefan Peev, DSc, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maria Miteva-Hristova, PhD, serving as reviewers. The work is structured into ten chapters

covering the etiology, pathogenesis, clinical features, diagnostics, and treatment of periodontitis, bone remodeling and osteoimmunology, morphology and classifications of periodontal bone defects, biological foundations of periodontal regeneration, surgical techniques including minimally invasive surgery and papilla preservation techniques, root surface conditioning, flap adaptation and suturing, modern regenerative biomaterials, core regenerative methods, and clinical approaches for infraosseous and furcation defects.

According to the author's reference, this publication summarizes contemporary materials on regenerative periodontal therapy with an emphasis on those available on the Bulgarian market. The more significant contributions of the work include:

- One of the first detailed reviews in specialized Bulgarian literature on the new generation of resorbable magnesium barrier membranes, including a description of the clinical protocol for working with them.
- The first detailed domestic review of Cortical Laminar Bone Membranes as resorbable xenogenic cortical bone membranes.
- Clarification of the molecular balance in bone remodeling via the RANK/RANKL/OPG triad and the mechanism by which pro-inflammatory cytokines drive pathological osteoclastogenesis in periodontitis.
- Formulation of five principles of surgical design and soft tissue management, defined by the author as prerequisites for predictable regenerative outcomes.
- Presentation of a clinical algorithm for selecting a regenerative approach.

Under Indicator B3, the candidate fulfills the required 100 points.

Indicator Group C: Scientific Publications

The candidate presents scientific publications as follows:

- Publications in scientific journals refereed and indexed in internationally renowned databases (Web of Science and Scopus): 9 items under Indicator G7, yielding 402 points.
- Publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes: 7 items under Indicator G8, yielding 62 points.

The total number of points under indicators G5 to G9 is 464, against a required minimum of 200. Eight of the publications are in journals with an impact factor, with a total IF of 15.2: *Materials (Basel)* (IF 3.1), *Pharmaceutics* (IF 5.5), and six publications in *Cureus* (IF 1.1). The proportion of literature reviews, case reports, and abstracts is 37.5%, remaining within the allowable limit of up to 40%.

Dr. Geroва-Vatsova participates in the competition with a total of 21 scientific works reflecting her research between 2020 and 2026. She is the sole author in 9 of them and the first author in 7. Seventeen of the publications are in English.

Her research interests span three main directions:

- **Regenerative therapy of vertical bone defects:** guided tissue regeneration, enamel matrix derivatives, autogenous platelet concentrates, and combined protocols evaluated clinically and via CBCT.
- **Biomaterials in periodontology and implantology:** barrier membranes, bone grafting materials, chitosan-modified grafts, and evaluation methodologies.
- **Non-surgical treatment of periodontal diseases:** diagnostic indices, furcation defects, post-extraction alveolar resorption, and the association between periodontology and pregnancy.

According to the author's reference, for the first time:

- The efficacy of guided tissue regeneration using a barrier membrane in combination with autologous platelet-rich plasma in vertical bone defects was investigated;
- Clinical and CBCT results of standalone PRP versus enamel matrix derivatives in the regenerative therapy of vertical bone defects were compared;
- Results of guided tissue regeneration using a barrier membrane alone versus in combination with PRP were compared;
- It was demonstrated that in certain clinical scenarios, vertical bone defects can be treated successfully without bone grafting material;
- A systematic evaluation of hybrid chitosan-modified bone grafts was performed;
- The methodology of histomorphometric analysis of undecalcified samples for evaluating bone regeneration was systematized.

Indicator Group D: Citations

The Academic Reference from the Library of MU-Varna indicates that the candidate has a total of 12 citations, granting 150 points against a required minimum of 80, distributed as follows:

- 9 citations in scientific journals refereed and indexed in internationally renowned scientific information databases (Indicator D10): 135 points;
- 3 citations in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals (Indicator D12): 15 points.

The citing publications are by Bulgarian and foreign author teams. Dr. Gerova-Vatsova maintains active scientific profiles in Web of Science Researcher ID, Scopus Author ID, ORCID, and Google Scholar.

Indicator Group E: Specialty, Scientific Forums, and Training of Students and Trainees

Dr. Tsvetalina Gerova-Vatsova has held a recognized specialty in "Periodontology and Oral Mucosa Diseases" since June 1, 2023. She participates in the training of dental medicine students in both Bulgarian and English and leads pre-graduation internships in the discipline. The submitted certificates verify postgraduate qualifications in reconstructive periodontal surgery and dental implantology.

Indicator Group F: Teaching Activity

The candidate has submitted a Workload Reference Ref. No. 112-128/09.06.2026, issued by MU-Varna, based on an annual norm of 360 hours:

- **2017/2018 academic year:** 390 teaching hours
- **2018/2019 academic year:** 314 teaching hours
- **2019/2020 academic year:** 342 teaching hours
- **2020/2021 academic year:** 80 teaching hours
- **2021/2022 academic year:** maternity leave
- **2022/2023 academic year:** 371 teaching hours
- **2023/2024 academic year:** 374 teaching hours
- **2024/2025 academic year:** maternity leave

Dr. Gerova-Vatsova commenced her teaching activities at MU-Varna on October 5, 2017. During the 2017/2018, 2022/2023, and 2023/2024 academic years, her workload exceeded the 360-hour norm, while in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 it was close to it. In 2020/2021, reported hours amounted to 80, and during 2021/2022 and 2024/2025, the candidate was on maternity leave. She conducts practical exercises and lectures in Bulgarian and English, as well as pre-graduation internships.

IV. General Assessment of Compliance with Mandatory Quantitative Criteria and Scientometric Indicators

Based on the presented evidentiary material, I have compiled a comparative table for the compliance of Dr. Tsvetalina Ivanova Gerova-Vatsova's results with the quantitative criteria and minimum scientometric indicators for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" at MU-Varna in Professional Field 7.2. Dental Medicine.

Indicator Group	Associate Professor: Minimum Scientometric Requirements	Dr. Tsvetalina Gerova-Vatsova's Points
A. Dissertation Work	50	50
B. Habilitation Work, Monograph	100	100
C. Scientific Publications	200	464

D. Citations	80	150
Total:	430	764

The candidate meets and exceeds the minimum scientometric requirements across all indicator groups. Under Group C, the result is more than double the required minimum, and under Group D, it is nearly double. The total score is 764 points against the required 430.

V. Conclusion

The review of the submitted documents and evidence regarding the scientific and teaching activities of Dr. Tsvetalina Ivanova Gerova-Vatsova, PhD, in the competition for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Higher Education Area 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.2. Dental Medicine, scientific specialty "Periodontology and Oral Mucosa Diseases," announced for the needs of the Department of Periodontology and Dental Implantology at the FDM of MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov," Varna (State Gazette, issue 50 of June 2, 2026), indicates that the candidate fulfills the mandatory conditions and minimum scientometric requirements under the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), its Implementing Regulations, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of MU-Varna.

Based on the foregoing, I cast a **POSITIVE VOTE** for awarding the academic position of "Associate Professor" to Dr. Tsvetalina Ivanova Gerova-Vatsova, PhD.

Date: 28.09 2026

City: Sofia

Prepared by:

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(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kamen Kotsilkov, PhD)

