

REVIEW

by **Prof. Veselinka Dimitrova Nestorova, MD, PhD**, Professor in the Professional field 7.1. Medicine, Scientific specialty Occupational diseases, specialist in Occupational medicine and neurology, Medical university "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna, appointed by Order No. R-109-262/30.07.2026 of the Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna as an internal member of the Scientific jury for the procedure for the academic position of Associate professor in the Higher education area 7. Healthcare and Sport, Professional field 7.1. Medicine, Scientific specialty Occupational diseases, at the Department of Optometry and occupational diseases, Faculty of Public health, Medical university "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Within the statutory application period following the announcement of the competition, one applicant submitted the required documents and was admitted to the evaluation procedure: **Vladina Miroslavova Dimitrova-Kirilova, MD, PhD**, Chief assistant professor at the Department of Optometry and occupational diseases, Faculty of Public health, Medical university "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

The application dossier submitted by the candidate complies with the requirements set forth in the Regulations for the Implementation of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Brief Biographical Information

Dr. Vladina Miroslavova Dimitrova-Kirilova, MD, PhD, graduated from the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna in 2013.

Her professional career began in 2013 as a physician at the Centre for Emergency Medical Care in Varna. In 2015, she was appointed as a resident physician at the Second neurology clinic with ICU and Stroke unit at the University Hospital "St. Marina" – Varna. She obtained her specialty qualification in Neurology in 2020 and, in 2023, commenced specialty training in Occupational diseases.

Dr. Dimitrova's academic career began in 2018 when she was appointed as an Assistant professor in the Teaching Unit of Occupational Diseases at the Department of Physiotherapy, rehabilitation, thalassotherapy and occupational diseases, Medical university "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

In 2023, she was awarded the educational and scientific degree of Doctor of Medicine (PhD) following the successful defence of her doctoral dissertation entitled "Occupational Predisposition to Silent Stroke."

Since 2024, Dr. Dimitrova has held the academic position of Chief assistant professor at the Department of Optometry and occupational diseases, Faculty of Public health, Medical university "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Dr. Dimitrova is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Association, the Bulgarian Society of Neurology, the European Stroke Organisation (ESO), and the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Occupational Diseases.

She regularly participates in the Annual National Congress of Neurology and the Congress of the European Stroke Organisation. In addition, she has been actively involved in the organization and implementation of the National Stroke Conference and the Summer Stroke School at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Dr. Dimitrova has a good command of the English language.

Teaching Activity

As an Assistant professor, Dr. Vladina Dimitrova has been actively engaged in undergraduate teaching since 2018. According to the official certificate submitted with the application, she has accumulated nine years of teaching experience, while the accompanying teaching workload report for the period 2018–2026 demonstrates that her classroom teaching hours substantially exceed the minimum institutional requirements.

Dr. Dimitrova conducts practical classes in Occupational disease for medical students enrolled in both the Bulgarian- and English-language programmes. She also teaches practical classes in Neurology for undergraduate students pursuing Bachelor's degree programmes in Speech and Language Therapy and Kinesitherapy at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Research Activity

An Academic Report on the candidate's publications, citations, and scientific profiles has been submitted, documenting Dr. Vladina Dimitrova's research output for the period 2019–2026. The candidate's publication record fully satisfies the minimum national and institutional requirements for appointment to the academic position of Associate professor.

A total of 31 scientific publications have been submitted for evaluation in the present competition, distributed as follows:

1. Indicator A1 – Doctoral dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) entitled "Occupational Predisposition to Silent Stroke" – 50 points.
2. Indicator B4 – Full-text articles published in journals indexed in internationally recognized scientific databases – 11 publications - 140.5 points.
3. Indicator G7 – Scientific publications and conference papers published in journals or proceedings indexed in internationally recognized scientific databases – 14 publications - 200 points.
4. Indicator G8 – Scientific publications and conference papers published in peer-reviewed journals not indexed in internationally recognized scientific databases – 6 publications - 42 points.

In addition, the candidate has submitted one publication exceeding the minimum scientometric requirements for the competition.

Three publications previously submitted as part of the requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree Doctor of Medicine (PhD) are also included.

Of the publications submitted for evaluation, Dr. Dimitrova is first author on five publications, second author on eighteen, third author on six, and fourth author on two publications. The cumulative Impact Factor (IF) of the journals in which her work has been published is 10.635.

According to the submitted documentation, Dr. Dimitrova's scientific publications have received eight citations, of which five are in publications indexed in internationally recognized scientific databases or in scholarly

monographs and edited volumes, while three citations are in peer-reviewed monographs and edited books.

Dr. Dimitrova's publication portfolio comprises 12 publications in Bulgarian and 19 publications in English.

The candidate maintains active researcher profiles in Web of Science, Scopus, ORCID, and Google Scholar, ensuring the visibility and accessibility of her scientific output.

Scientific Contributions

Dr. Vladina Dimitrova's scientific publications are focused on the following principal research areas:

1. Occupational risk factors and cerebrovascular diseases;
2. Cerebrovascular diseases - etiology, treatment, prognostic factors, complications, and quality of life;
3. Sleep neurology and occupationally related sleep disorders;
4. Deep brain stimulation in Parkinson's disease.

The submitted body of research addresses important and insufficiently explored topics in the fields of Occupational diseases and neurology, with particular emphasis on the impact of occupational risk factors on cerebrovascular disease and sleep disorders. Several of these investigations represent the first studies of their kind conducted in Bulgaria, providing original data where systematic evidence for the Bulgarian population has previously been lacking.

The principal scientific contributions of Dr. Dimitrova's research may be summarized as follows:

1. Occupational Risk Factors and Cerebrovascular Diseases

I. Original Scientific Contributions

- For the first time in Bulgaria, the relationship between occupational stress and asymptomatic cerebrovascular disease has been investigated, demonstrating the role of occupational stress as a co-factor in the etiopathogenesis of asymptomatic cerebrovascular disease.

- For the first time nationally, the influence of occupational characteristics on levels of work-related stress has been examined. Higher occupational stress levels were found to be associated with longer working hours, longer duration of employment, and shift work.
- A pioneering Bulgarian study has evaluated the contribution of occupational risk factors to the epidemiology of stroke among individuals of working age. The findings confirmed the synergistic interaction between traditional vascular risk factors and occupational risk factors in the development of stroke.

2. Cerebrovascular Diseases - Etiology, Treatment, Prognostic Factors, Complications, and Quality of Life

I. Original Scientific Contributions

- Clinical, laboratory, and neuroimaging characteristics, together with prognostic factors in various forms of cerebrovascular disease, including rare etiological subtypes, have been identified, contributing to improved diagnostic accuracy and optimization of therapeutic strategies.
- The independent prognostic value of C-reactive protein and leukocytosis for in-hospital mortality among young and middle-aged patients with acute ischemic stroke has been demonstrated.
- Current knowledge regarding early functional outcomes after acute stroke has been expanded through the identification of the incidence, spectrum, and risk factors of in-hospital complications and post-stroke epilepsy, as well as through the assessment of quality-of-life recovery during the post-stroke period.

II. Scientific and Applied Contributions

- The international RES-Q (Registry of Stroke Care Quality) has been implemented for the assessment of the quality of acute ischemic stroke care, enabling international benchmarking and supporting the optimization of stroke care delivery.

3. Sleep Neurology and Occupationally Related Sleep Disorders

I. Original Scientific Contributions

- For the first time in Bulgaria, a polysomnographic study has been conducted to evaluate sleep quality and sleep disorders among shift

workers. The study confirmed significantly impaired sleep quality in individuals engaged in shift work.

- The influence of occupational factors associated with shift work on sleep quality has also been investigated for the first time in Bulgaria. The findings demonstrated the adverse effect of longer duration of shift work on sleep quality.

4. Deep Brain Stimulation in Parkinson's Disease

I. Original Scientific Contributions

- National clinical experience in the treatment of advanced Parkinson's disease has been enriched through the evaluation of the effectiveness of bilateral subthalamic deep brain stimulation on motor symptoms, quality of life, and sleep disturbances.

II. Scientific and Applied Contributions

- A multidisciplinary algorithm for patient selection for bilateral subthalamic deep brain stimulation in Parkinson's disease has been developed and successfully implemented in clinical practice.

Conclusion

Based on my evaluation of the scientific publications and the supporting documentation submitted by Dr. Vladina Miroslavova Dimitrova-Kirilova, MD, PhD, for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate professor, I conclude that the quantity and quality of the submitted scientific output not only satisfy but exceed the minimum scientometric requirements established by the Regulations for the Implementation of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical university "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Having carefully assessed the candidate's overall academic achievements, teaching and research activities, and the documentation submitted for the present competition, together with my personal impressions of Dr. Dimitrova as a highly competent, erudite, and ethically committed colleague, I confidently express my positive evaluation of her candidacy.

I therefore respectfully recommend that the distinguished members of the Scientific Jury vote in favour of awarding Dr. Vladina Miroslavova Dimitrova-Kirilova, MD, PhD, the academic position of Associate Professor in Occupational diseases, Professional field 7.1. Medicine, Higher education area 7. Healthcare and Sport, for the needs of the Department of Optometry and occupational disease, Faculty of Public health, Medical university "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna, and the Second Neurology clinic with ICU and Stroke unit, University Hospital "St. Marina" EAD, Varna.

In view of the above, I respectfully propose that the Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna appoint Dr. Vladina Miroslavova Dimitrova-Kirilova to the academic position of Associate Professor in Occupational diseases.

14.08.2026

Varna, Bulgaria

Reviewer:

/Prof. Veselinka Nestorova, MD, PhD/

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