

OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Gospodinka Radeva Prakova, MD, PhD – Department of Internal Medicine and General Medicine at the Medical Faculty of Trakia University – Stara Zagora

member of the Scientific Jury according to Order № P-109-262/30. 07. 2026 of the Rector of the Medical University-Varna on the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Occupational Diseases", in the field of higher education 7. Health and Sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine, promulgated in the State Gazette No. 85/17.10.2025 at the Department of Optometry and Occupational Diseases, Faculty of Public Health of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov" - Varna.

The review is in accordance with the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the Terms and Procedure for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at the Medical University - Varna.

One candidate has submitted documents for participation in the competition - Senior Asst. Prof. Dr. Vladina Miroslavova Dimitrova-Kirilova, MD

Dr. Vladina Dimitrova-Kirilova graduated from the Medical University of Varna in 2013. From 2013 to 2020, she worked successively at the Central Emergency Center - Varna, in the Emergency Department of the University Hospital "St. Marina" - Varna and as a specialist doctor at the Second Neurological Clinic of the University Hospital "St. Marina" - Varna. From 2021 to the present, she is an assistant professor in the discipline of nervous diseases at the Second Neurological Clinic with OILNB and OLOMI, University Hospital "St. Marina" - Varna. From 2018 to 2024, she is an assistant professor in occupational diseases, at the Department of Optometry and Occupational Diseases of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov"-Varna. In 2023, she successfully defended her dissertation on the topic "Occupational predisposition in asymptomatic strokes" and since 2024 has held the academic position of senior assistant professor of occupational diseases at the same Department. She has acquired a specialty in Nervous Diseases in 2020, and since 2023 she has specialized in Occupational Diseases. She annually participates in the National Congresses of Neurology with international participation and in the congresses of the European Stroke Organization. Dr. Vladina Dimitrova is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Union, the Bulgarian Society of Neurology, the European Stroke Association, the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Occupational Diseases.

Scientific research activity

Dr. V. Dimitrova-Kirilova participated in the competition with 32 scientific works, which include: 1 dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", 25 full-text articles that have been published in publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information and 6 publications and reports in non-refereed journals with scientific review. In 5 of the publications, Dr. V. Dimitrova is the lead author, in 18 - second, and in the rest - third and following. Twelve of the publications are in Bulgarian, and 19 - in English. The total IF of the journals in which the candidate has publications is 10.635.

Dr. V. Dimitrova presents evidence for 8 citations, 5 of which are in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes, and 3 in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review. Dr. V. Dimitrova has active scientific profiles in Web of science, Scopus, ORCID and Google Scholar. She has participated in 20 scientific forums with reports and posters, 7 of which with international participation.

The scientific research contributions of the presented scientific papers are mainly related to the study of the relationship between occupational exposure and neurological diseases, with

an emphasis on the influence of occupational risk factors on cerebrovascular disease and sleep disorders. Some of the scientific studies were conducted for the first time in the country due to the absence of data for the Bulgarian population.

➤ *Scientific and theoretical contributions of an original nature*

In the field of occupational risk factors and cerebrovascular diseases, for the first time in Bulgaria, the **role of occupational stress as a cofactor in the etiopathogenesis of asymptomatic cerebrovascular disease** has been studied and proven. An association has been established between higher levels of occupational stress, longer working hours, longer professional experience and shift work. The synergistic effect between known vascular factors and occupational risk factors in the epidemiology of strokes has been confirmed. **In scientific studies concerning cerebrovascular diseases**, the clinical, laboratory and imaging features, as well as prognostic factors in various forms of cerebrovascular diseases, have been determined, which optimizes the diagnostic and therapeutic behavior. The independent prognostic value of C-reactive protein and leukocytosis for hospital mortality in young and middle-aged patients with acute ischemic stroke has been proven. Knowledge about the early functional outcome after acute cerebral stroke has been expanded by establishing the frequency, structure and risk factors for the development of hospital complications and post-stroke epilepsy, as well as the dynamics of recovery of quality of life. Of particular interest are the studies of Dr. V. Dimitrova on **the relationship between sleep neurology and occupationally determined sleep disorders**. For the first time in Bulgaria, a polysomnographic study of sleep quality and the presence of sleep disorders in shift workers has been conducted, confirming the reduced quality of sleep. The positive correlation between the duration of work experience with a shift work regime on sleep quality has been proven.

➤ *Scientific and applied contributions to clinical practice*

As a specialist neurologist, Dr. V. Dimitrova enriches the Bulgarian clinical experience in the treatment of **advanced Parkinson's disease by analyzing the effectiveness of bilateral subthalamic deep brain stimulation** on motor disorders, quality of life and sleep disorders. A multidisciplinary algorithm for selecting patients suitable for this therapeutic approach has been developed and implemented.

A contribution of a scientific and applied nature to clinical practice is the implementation **and use of the international RES-Q registry for assessing the quality of treatment of patients with acute ischemic stroke**, which allows international comparison of indicators and optimization of the organization of stroke care.

Dr. V. Dimitrova has participated with posters and reports in 20 scientific forums in Bulgaria and abroad.

➤ *Teaching and learning activities*

Dr. V. Dimitrova-Kirilova has 9 years of teaching experience at the Medical University-Varna. She has successively passed through the academic positions of assistant and chief assistant at the Department of Optometry and Occupational Diseases, Faculty of Public Health of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov"-Varna. The presented report for the period 2018-2026 establishes a significant number of classroom hours, which exceeds the regulatory requirements. The annual academic workload for the last three years is respectively 248 (2023), 300 (2024) and 262 (2025) academic hours with a required standard of 220 academic hours. Leads practical classes in the discipline "Occupational Diseases" for students majoring in

"Medicine" (with instruction in Bulgarian and English), as well as exercises in the discipline "Nervous Diseases" for students majoring in "Speech Therapy" and "Kinesitherapy" at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov"-Varna. During the 2025-2026 academic year, she will be teaching lectures on the discipline "Occupational Diseases" to students majoring in "Medicine" studying in English.

Conclusion

Dr. V. Dimitrova-Kirilova is a lecturer and researcher with a strong interest in the field of nervous diseases and their relationship with occupational risk factors, possesses the necessary qualities, meets the quantitative and qualitative criteria, and the minimum national requirements for participation in a competition and occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor", according to the Law on the State of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation at the Medical University of Varna. The presented scientometric indicators by groups are as follows - group "A" - 50 points for a successfully defended dissertation for the award of the Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor", group "B" - 140.5 points for publications in refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, group "D" - 242 points, group "E" - 105 with a minimum of 80 points.

This gives me reason to vote **positively for the election of Dr. Vladina Miroslavova Dimitrova-Kirilova, MD, to the academic position of "Associate Professor"**, in the scientific specialty "Occupational Diseases" in the professional field 7.1. Medicine, field of higher education 7. Health Care at the Department of "Optometry and Occupational Diseases" of the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov"-Varna.

14. 08. 2026

Prepared the opinion:

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

St. Zagora

/Prof. Dr. Gospodinka Prakova, MD, PhD/