

OPINION

by

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Regarding: Competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the specialty of "Orthopedics and Traumatology", Professional Field 7.1 Medicine, Higher Education Area 7. Healthcare and Sport, for the Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology, Faculty of Medicine, Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna, as announced in the State Gazette, issue 102, dated Nov 28, 2025, with candidate Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev, MD, PhD.

The opinion has been prepared on the basis of Order № P-109-67/28.01.2026 of the Rector of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna and is in accordance with the Law and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the organization, activity, and internal order of MU – Varna.

I have no conflict of interest and have not identified any data regarding plagiarism. The materials for the competition were provided to me within the legally established timeframe; the set of documents is correctly organized and complies with the requirements of the Law and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the Medical University – Varna.

I. Biographical and Professional Data

Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev completed his higher medical education at the Medical University of Varna in 2010. In 2018, he acquired a recognized specialty in "Orthopedics and Traumatology". In the same year, he completed a Master's degree in "Health Management," thereby expanding his professional qualification in the field of health systems management. In October 2016, he successfully defended the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" (PhD) with a dissertation on the topic: "Contemporary aspects of diagnostics and treatment of ligamentous injuries of the lateral column of the ankle joint," aimed at optimizing the diagnostic and treatment algorithm for this group of traumatic injuries.

Since 2017, he has been part of the academic staff of the Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology at the Medical University of Varna, successively holding the positions of Assistant Professor and, since 2019, Chief Assistant Professor. Within his teaching activities,

he actively participates in the training of medical students and residents, combining academic work with intensive clinical practice.

From 2022 to the present, he has been working as an orthopedic trauma specialist at the Clinic of Orthopedics and Traumatology at "St. Marina" University hospital – Varna, where he develops highly specialized diagnostic and therapeutic activities in the field of traumatology and orthopedic surgery.

II. Research and Development Activity

The scientific output of Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev is characterized by consistency, thematic focus, and a steady presence in specialized scientific literature. The total volume of scientific works includes:

- Abstract of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" – 1 unit;
- Habilitation work (monograph) – 1 unit;
- Scientific publications in specialized journals with and without SJR and/or IF – 19 units total (Appendix 20.4);
- Participations in national and international scientific forums – 84 (Appendix 19).

In the procedure for the academic position of "Associate Professor," the candidate participates with a total of 19 scientific works (Appendix 13.1), structured as follows:

- Habilitation work (monograph) – 1 unit;
- Scientific publications in journals with SJR and/or IF, indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science – 8 units;
- Scientific publications referred in Web of Science – 8 units;
- Articles in peer-reviewed but non-indexed editions and collections of scientific conferences without IF and SJR – 11 units.

Among the publications submitted for the competition, Dr. Penev is the first author in 10 works and a co-author (second or third) in 9, which is an indicator of an active leading role in formulating scientific problems, organizing the research process, analyzing results, and their publication. The cumulative Impact Factor (IF) of the journals in which the candidate has publications exceeds 11 (Appendix 13). According to data from ResearchGate, the candidate possesses an h-index of 2. The total number of citations is 27, primarily in refereed periodic journals.

Regarding the fulfillment of the scientometric criteria adopted by MU – Varna, the provided materials show that the candidate possesses the necessary number of points, distributed as follows according to the individual groups:

| Indicator Group | Content | Associate Professor (Required Points) | Points of Dr. Preslav Penev, MD, PhD |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| A | Indicator 1 | 50 | 80 |
| B | Indicator 4 | 100 | 100 |
| Г | Sum of Indicators 5 to 9 | 200 | 291.57 |

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----|----|
| Д | Sum of Indicators 10 to 12 | 50 | 9- |
|---|----------------------------|----|----|

Additionally, from the report of participations in various scientific forums, it is evident that Dr. Preslav Penev is active in presenting reports and posters at the largest scientific events related to the specialty of "Orthopedics and Traumatology" in the country and abroad. These include national congresses of the Bulgarian Orthopedic and Traumatological Association (BOTA), the European Congress of the European Society for Sports Traumatology (ESSKA), congresses of the European Federation of National Associations of Orthopedics and Traumatology (EFORT), international annual symposia of BOTA, and many others.

Thematic directions of scientific research:

Dr. Preslav Penev's scientific developments are focused primarily on the field of foot and ankle surgery, with main directions including:

- Minimally invasive intramedullary fixation for fibular fractures;
- Modern approaches in the treatment of chondral defects of the ankle joint;
- Diagnosis and treatment of Lisfranc type ligamentous injuries;
- Application of gravity stress radiography as a method for classification and therapeutic planning in ankle fractures.

Additional scientific interests and publications are directed towards:

- Prevention and reduction of infectious complications when using external fixators;
- Conservative treatment of lateral epicondylitis through extracorporeal shock-wave therapy;
- Personalized choice of surgical technique in the treatment of carpal tunnel syndrome.

III. Teaching Load of the Candidate

Dr. Penev's teaching activity began as an Assistant Professor in 2017, and since 2019 as a Chief Assistant Professor in the Department of "Orthopedics and Traumatology" at the Medical University – Varna. From then until now, he has participated in theoretical and practical teaching of orthopedics and traumatology to 4th-year medical students, as well as trainee doctors from the Faculty of Medicine (FM) at MU-Varna.

Based on an official report prepared by the Academic Department of MU-Varna, the candidate has a teaching load of a total of 700 equivalent hours for the last 3 academic years, which meets the national requirements of the Law and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

IV. Diagnostic and Therapeutic Activity

Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev possesses long-standing practical experience in the field of orthopedics and traumatology, acquired in established medical institutions with different profiles and volumes of activity. His professional path began in 2011 at the Clinic of Orthopedics and Traumatology at "St. Anna" Hospital – Varna, where he worked until 2022, developing clinical competencies in musculoskeletal traumatology.

From 2013 to 2016, he also carried out therapeutic and diagnostic activities in the Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology at Targovishte Hospital, gaining additional experience in emergency and elective orthopedic care. Since 2022, he has been part of the team at the Clinic of Orthopedics and Traumatology at "St. Marina" University hospital – Varna, a university hospital with a third level of competence.

For the past 8 years, Dr. Penev has practiced as a recognized specialist, participating independently and in teams in the diagnosis, surgical, and conservative treatment of a wide range of traumatic and degenerative diseases. His clinical experience is distinguished by consistency, depth, and the integration of modern approaches into daily practice.

V. CONCLUSION

As a participant in the competition for the academic position of "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" in the scientific specialty "Orthopedics and Traumatology," Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev has submitted all required documents, including publications, diplomas, and certificates from scientific events and courses.

It is evident that Dr. Penev meets and exceeds the requirements of the ZRASRB and the internal Regulations of the Medical University – Varna. He has diverse scientific interests, is familiar with modern surgical methods, and has proven his qualities as a teacher, specialist, and scientist.

Based on the above, I give my positive assessment of Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev, MD, PhD, for the academic position of "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" and recommend that the esteemed jury vote positively.

City of Pleven 23.02.2026

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