

OPINION

**by Prof. Nikolay Ivanov Dimitrov, MD, PhD Department of
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Regarding: The 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 Sports, 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 28.11.2025.

By Order of the Rector of MU-Varna No. R-109-67/28.01.2026 and the decision (Protocol 52/12.01.2026), I have been included in the Scientific Jury. By decision of the Chairman of the Scientific Jury (Protocol No. 1/10.02.2026), I have been appointed to prepare a Scientific Opinion as an external member regarding the procedure for acquiring the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the aforementioned specialty and institution.

One candidate, Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev, MD, PhD, participated and was admitted by the documentation review committee. The candidate has submitted all necessary documents in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff and the Regulations of Medical University – Varna. He currently serves as a Chief Assistant Professor at the Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology at MU-Varna and works at the Clinic of Orthopedics and Traumatology at University Hospital "St. Marina" – Varna.

The candidate graduated from MU-Varna in 2010 and specialized in Orthopedics and Traumatology in 2018. In 2016, he was awarded the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" (PhD) in the specialty of Orthopedics and Traumatology at MU-Varna, defending a

dissertation titled: "Modern Aspects of Diagnosis and Treatment of Ligamentous Injuries of the Lateral Column of the Ankle Joint."

Dr. Penev's professional experience began as an orthopedic surgeon at "St. Anna" Hospital, Varna (2011–2022). He subsequently practiced at "Hygia" and "Odessos" Medical Centers as an orthopedic-traumatologist, where he continues to work. Since 2019, he has been a Chief Assistant Professor at MU-Varna, with over 9 years of teaching experience in "Orthopedics and Traumatology" for medical students in both Bulgarian and English. He is fluent in English and has completed numerous long-term specializations in Davos and Zurich (Switzerland), Mainz and Munich (Germany), Zagreb (Croatia), and others.

Dr. Penev is a member of BOTA, BLS, BAAST, BSST, EFORT, ESSKA, and others. He holds qualifications in highly specialized activities, including Arthroscopy, Joint Arthroplasty, and Pediatric Hip Ultrasound. In 2017, he completed a Master's degree in Health Management.

Dr. Preslav Penev is the author of two monographs:

- Injection Techniques in Orthopedics and Traumatology; MU-Varna, ISBN 978-619-221-575-0.
- Lateral Ankle Instability; Steno Publishing; ISBN 978-619-241-086-5.

He has also participated in three successfully completed scientific projects.

SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

For this competition, Dr. Penev has submitted a list and digital copies of 105 scientific works, including one monograph and one dissertation abstract. The total number of publications (27) includes 25 articles in journals and proceedings, most of which are in English. This includes 8 publications in journals with SJR/IF (indexed in Scopus/Web of Science) and 9 in non-refereed journals. The candidate is the lead author of 10 publications, with a total of 27 citations, primarily in refereed periodicals.

His scientific works and citations fully meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff and the MU-Varna Regulations for the position of "Associate Professor." His research interests focus on foot and ankle surgery, specifically Lisfranc ligament injuries, minimally invasive intramedullary fixation of fibular fractures, and treatment of chondral defects. Other topics include personalized approaches to carpal tunnel syndrome, conservative treatment of lateral epicondylitis, and reducing infections in external fixation.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Of particular value in Dr. Penev's original scientific output are:

- Establishing the primary significance of the plantar ligament in Lisfranc soft-tissue injuries in athletes.
- Assessing autologous cartilage fragmentation and open ligamentous repair for osteochondral lesions of the lateral talus combined with chronic instability.

His confirmatory contributions to national orthopedics include:

- Introducing CT analysis of 1st metatarsal and 2nd cuneiform separation for surgical indications.
- Implementing intramedullary fibular nails as a minimally invasive method.
- Introducing antibiotic-releasing/coated pins for external fixation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the submitted documentation and scientific output, Dr. Preslav Plamenov Penev, MD, PhD, fully meets the mandatory requirements for the academic position. I give a "positive" vote and recommend to the Scientific Jury and the Rector of MU-Varna that Dr. Penev be elected as "Associate Professor" of Orthopedics and Traumatology.

20.02.2026

Prof. Dr. N. Dimitrov, MD, PhD

