

REVIEW

from

Assoc.Prof. Dr. Nevyana Feschieva, MD, PhD

Concerning: Competition for academic position "Professor" – declared in SG issue 62/06.08.2019 in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Organisation of Health Care and Pharmacy (expertise of working capacity)", professional field 7.1. Medicine, in the field of the higher education 7. Healthcare and sport, for the needs of the Department "Hygiene and Epidemiology", in the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov" – Varna.

1. Information regarding the procedure:

According to Order P-109-313/07.10.2019 of the Rector of MU-Varna and Protocol No 1/21.10.2019 from a meeting of the "Public Health" faculty I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to prepare a review concerning the competition for AP "Professor" in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Organisation of Health Care and Pharmacy (expertise of working capacity)" at Medical University – Varna. The competition was announced in SG issue 62/06.08.2019. It is in accordance with the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules of the Medical University - Varna. On the basis of the abovementioned legal documents, all the procedural requirements for the announcement of the competition, the deadline for submission of documents and the choice of a scientific jury are met. The only candidate is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paraskeva Mancheva Draganova, MD, PhD, DSc. The documents submitted by the candidate regarding her participation in the competition are precisely arranged according to the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act and the Rules of MU-Varna.

2. Brief information about Assoc. Prof. Paraskeva Mancheva's career development

Graduated with a master's degree in medicine in 1989. She has three medical specialties: Internal Medicine - 1994, Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine - 1999, and General Medicine -

2001. In 2013, after defending her dissertation *"Legal Awareness for Legalizing of Euthanasia and Quality of Life for Polymorbid Patients with Permanently Reduced Working Capacity"*, she was awarded with "doctor" and occupied the academic position of Assistant Professor the year after that. In 2015, she graduated with a master's degree in law and in 2016 obtained legal capacity at the Ministry of Justice. In 2018, she successfully defended her dissertation on "Medical and Social Issues of Disability in the System of Medical Expertise" and obtained a PhD in "Social Medicine and Organisation of Health Care and Pharmacy". Her total professional experience is 29 years 9 months 7 days, of which the first 10 years she spent as a doctor at the Municipal Hospital, Kavarna, from 1999 to 2014 respectively Assistant, Senior Assistant and Chief Assistant at the Department of General Medicine at the Medical University of Varna, and an Associate Professor since 08.12.2014, head of the Rehabilitation Training Sector at the Medical College of MU-Varna. She leads the University Center for Eastern Medicine since 2017.

Her expertise as a physician-member of General Territorial Expert Medical Commission (TEMC) began in 2006 at the TEMC of St. Marina University Hospital, Varna, with almost seven years of experience. She has completed various postgraduate courses corresponding to the occupational position. Since 1999, in addition to her clinical and scientific research work, she has been involved in the teaching of the following disciplines: expertise of working capacity, labor and social security law, general medicine for specialists and students, kinesitherapy, disability rehabilitation and occupational therapy, as well as Eastern Medicine (Acupuncture, Traditional Chinese Medicine) in the undergraduate and postgraduate training courses at MU-Varna as an Internationally certified trainer.

In 2019 she undergoes training in the project "Expertise of working capacity", funded under the Operational Program "Human Resources Development", 2014-2020, for the implementation of ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) among specialists in the health and social systems, with the participation of WHO experts with proven international experience. Assoc. Prof. Mancheva presented for discussion university cases, which participate in the Ethics Committee of Research at MU-Varna, University Committee for Institutional and Accreditation Program, Committee for the Development of Credit System for Evaluation of Medical Education Training. She has participated in 5 educational and research projects, two of which are international. Foreign languages for communication are English and Russian.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paraskeva Mancheva has been constantly developing as a professional, has expanded her qualification in several fields of medicine, proven with her three medical specialties. She has obtained a second higher education in law; combined practical medical work and experience as a physician - member of the TEMC with the enrichment of her scientific researches and management experience. She defended her PhD. All this is a good basis on which she develops her scientific pursuits and is a serious request for her participation in the competition.

3. Assessment of the candidate's scientific activity, quantity scientific indicators

Assoc. Prof. Mancheva's complete list, which presents her in the competition contains 61 positions, and the review list contains 43 scientific publications, 29 of which are intended for the fulfillment of the minimal requirements for the occupation of "Professor" and 14 - beyond the evidence given for the fulfillment of the minimal requirements for the academic position.

The indicators according to the individual criteria, proving the fulfillment of the minimal requirements for the occupation of the academic position of "Professor", according to Academic Staff Development Act in Republic of Bulgaria from 2018 of 2018 are the following:

- ✓ Group of indicators "A". Indicator 1: Dissertation for doctoral degree – 1 in total;
- ✓ Group of indicators "Б". Indicator 2: Dissertation for the award of scientific degree "Doctor of Science" – 1 in total;
- ✓ Group of indicators "B". Indicator 3: Published habilitation work – monograph – 1 in total;
- ✓ Group of indicators "Г". Indicator 7: Publications in scientific editions, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information – 1 in total;
- ✓ Group of indicators "Г". Indicator 8: Publications in peer-reviewed journals, not referenced in world-renowned databases with scientific information – 25 in total;
- ✓ Group of indicators "Г". Indicator 9: Published chapter from a collective monograph – 1 in total;
- ✓ Group of indicators "E". Indicator 20: Published university textbook – 1 in total.

Publications excluding the ones presented in the evidence for the fulfillment of the minimal requirements for the occupation of the scientific position "Professor" are:

- ✓ Publications related to the dissertation for doctoral degree - 5 in total;
- ✓ Publications related to the dissertation for award of scientific degree "doctor of science" – 11 in total;
- ✓ Full-text publications in foreign scientific journals – 4 in total;
- ✓ Full-text publications in Bulgarian scientific journals – 10 in total.

The publications reviewed by the candidate's place in the authors' teams show her opportunities for independent and leading role: she is a single author of 12 of her full-text publications in scientific journals (28%); first author - in 9 publications (21%); second author - in 15 publications (35%), third and subsequent author - in 7 publications (16%).

Minimal required points by groups of indicators for the academic position of "Professor" according to the Academic Staff Development Act in Republic of Bulgaria from 2018 and rules for its implementation

Group of indicators	Content	Professor Academic Staff Development Act in Republic of Bulgaria (2018) and rules for its implementation (number of points)	Paraskeva Mancheva (number of points)
A	Indicator 1: Dissertation for doctoral degree	50	50
Б	Indicator 2: Dissertation for the award of scientific degree "Doctor of Science"	-	100
В	Indicator 3 or 4: Habilitation work, i.e. monograph, presented in connection with the habilitation procedure	100	100
Г	Total of indicators from 5 to 9	200	490
Д	Total of indicators from 10 to 12	100	240
Е	Total of indicators from 13 to the end	100	370

The data from the table shows that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paraskeva Mancheva, MD, Ph.D, Dsc. repeatedly exceeds the set national criteria for the academic position of "professor".

4. Assessment of the monograph

The candidate presents the monograph/habilitation work "Disability with TEMC - Problems and Solutions" with ISBN 978-954-449-968-6/978-619-221-142-4. The work fully meets the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in Republic of Bulgaria (2018), and rules for its implementation and Rules of the Medical University - Varna: it has been published in a circulation of 230 (with 200 required), based on 280 literature sources (with 160 required), has two positive reviews. The work is a serious, large-scale study of the problems of people with disabilities in the context and depending on the functioning of the system of medical expertise. It is based on very good quantitative and qualitative studies.

The legal framework and organization of medical expertise are considered in parallel and interrelated with the path of the person with disabilities - from the GP to the expert decision - the key to obtaining rights, and after that - to the implementation of rehabilitation, which can be a factor in the prevention of complications and in the preventable deepening disability. The contributory nature of the work is determined by the broad problem-based approach and the concept of integrated assessment and rehabilitation, with well-founded solutions for better access to rights for persons with disabilities and, on the other hand, for mechanisms, which control the misusage of public funds.

5. Assessment of the scientific contributions

The retrospective analysis of the scientific work of Assoc. Prof. Paraskeva Mancheva shows that a large part of the publications gravitate around one center - *the chronically ill person with his/hers socio-medical needs and the ability of the health, social and educational systems to respond to them*. Over time, it focuses on the disabled person, his/her rights and comprehensive rehabilitation. A look at the chronology of the candidate's publication activity shows that the genesis of the central theme originates from her work as a clinician and her position in the Department of General Medicine, which intersected the general medical practice in order to achieve optimization of GPs' training in the reforming conditions of medical assistance. Later,

her scientific subject is modeled from her expertise in TEMC, which brings the candidate closer to the real problems of the vulnerable group - people with disabilities. The competences she is pursuing in the field of higher law education encourage her to seek a legal basis for resolving patients' socio-legal problems. In addition to her routine work on improving student education in the sector, as a head of the Educational Sector for Rehabilitation at the Medical College of Medical University of Varna Assoc. Prof. Mancheva binds theoretically, practically and in different research aspects, the preparation of rehabilitation, kinesitherapy and occupational therapy students to participate in the complex rehabilitation of the chronically ill person.

Looking at the topic of Assoc. Prof. Mancheva's research, I find the systematization, which makes its scientific appearances in 5 directions, completely logical:

1. Medical, social and legal problems of people with disabilities in the system of medical expertise, health and social systems;
2. Investigation of the legal awareness of euthanasia from the medical examination system among patients with disabilities;
3. Organization of the system of medical expertise of working capacity;\
4. Improvement of the student training (rehabilitation, kinesitherapy and ergotherapy) with the aim of complex rehabilitation of the chronically ill person and restoration of his working capacity;
5. Opportunities for the introduction of Eastern medicine as adjunctive therapy for patients with chronic disabling conditions.

In *the first thematic field*, the patient's path from GP to TEMC is traced, in the way it is normatively determined. The difficulties have been formulated and possibilities for optimization of the procedure have been proposed, as well as the role of the expert decision has been determined through the prism of the rights of people with disabilities (*applied science contribution*). The candidate has systematically approached and investigated the opinion of patients with disabilities about the functioning of the medical expertise system. It is disturbing to conclude that there is no positive change in the status and quality of life of the witnessed, as well as the underestimated role of rehabilitation and the absence of the labor-legal function of the TEMC.

The candidate does not overlook the public health impact of National Insurance Institute's expenses on the Disability Function and the danger of stereotyping and stigmatization (if they are not there yet) towards the disabled as a "non-valuable social group" too which a significant public

resource is ineffectively directed (*theoretical and methodological as well as applied science contribution*). In this context, it is logical to examine the reasons for the inadequate social integration of people with disabilities, what is the subject of publications. The results of the focus groups studies give Assoc. Prof. Mancheva grounds to recommend to the National Assembly legislative amendments towards the unification of medical and social assessment of disability; referral to TEMC of employed people only; setting up a specialized Children's Expert Medical Committee; the retired population (by age and length of service) to undergo only social assessment (*applied science contribution*).

The second thematic field includes studies on euthanasia, which are unique by character and methodology. Not only that the candidate enriches the theoretical knowledge on the subject, its legal regulation, and main stands in the ethical debate (*theoretical and methodological contribution*), but she has also developed instruments of study of legal consciousness (*applied science contribution*). The latter allow her to provide empirical evidence for the thesis that the primary motive of patients to desire euthanasia is the poor quality of life; a motive that has long been exploited in the ethical literature on the subject. To study such a phenomenon in the context of a legal ban of end-of-life medical intervention is extremely difficult, both in terms of methodology that would allow access to the target group in accordance with ethical principles for research and validation of the results.

Contrary to the traditional argument in favor of euthanasia, Assoc. Prof. Mancheva finds that polymorbid patients with disabilities from TEMC do not approve the legalization of euthanasia in Bulgaria, what "gives green light" to the health and social systems to seek for new approaches to solve the problems of euthanasia before discussing legislative amendments on it (*de lege ferenda practical contribution*), which would strike new and unknown moral responsibilities on medical professionals.

The applicant's multidisciplinary qualification including clinical experience in internal medicine, physical and rehabilitation medicine, general medicine, expert work at TEMC and training in law enables her to pursue innovative scientific research on the organization of the system of medical expertise of working capacity in *the third thematic field*. The current status of the system is analyzed, its disadvantages and the potential for practical solutions (*theoretical and methodological as well as applied science contribution*) are outlined. A survey on the opinion of the stakeholders' experts served as a basis for formulation of the need for a unified medico-social

assessment of disability, the separation of different groups of workers, retired people and children and a unified hierarchical control (*applied science contribution*).

Assoc. Prof. Mancheva doesn't limit herself to only identifying problems and outlining ideas for reforms, but also develops a concept of a model for a complex medico-social assessment of working capacity, adapted to the European experience, where she sets a new hierarchical structure of the system and a complex one-act medico-social expertise towards ensuring a timely and adequate social integration. The developed conceptual model can guarantee an increase in the number of people with disabilities who have received a complex rehabilitation, restored their working capacity or re-qualified in accordance to their preserved working capabilities (*theoretical and methodological as well as applied science contribution*).

The work in the system of medical expertise, as well as the care for people with chronic disabling diseases, are carried out by the medical professionals that we train. In this line of reasoning, an in-depth researcher cannot fail to examine the training and to look for possible mechanisms to improve it in the direction of a complex rehabilitation of the chronically ill person and the restoration of his/her working capacity. This is the focus of Assoc. Prof. Mancheva's works in *the fourth thematic field*. She studies the attitude, needs and satisfaction from the teaching process and the realization on the labor market among rehabilitation students; evaluates training methods; makes suggestions for expansion of the curriculum (*theoretical and methodological as well as applied science contribution*). The satisfaction of end-users - patients - with the work of rehabilitators and kinesi therapists was also studied, what guarantees a holistic science-based approach to the improvement of the academic content (*applied science contribution*).

The strongest innovation potential can be found in the candidate's works within *the fifth thematic field* - opportunities for the introduction of Eastern medicine as adjunctive therapy for patients with chronic disabling conditions. With the birth of the modern hospice movement in the 1960s, the concept of palliative/hospice care incorporated "unconventional medical practices", such as aromatherapy, reflexology and other less known techniques. There is accumulated evidence of patient satisfaction, but studies on benefits are scarce even in countries with strong traditions in hospice care.

Under these circumstances of practical and scientific vacuity for the application of Eastern medicine in Bulgaria in general, the research of Assoc. Prof. Mancheva on the possibilities for cooperation between Eastern and Western medicine with a focus on the problems of chronically

ill disabled patients (*theoretical and methodological as well as applied science contribution*) is unique and I strongly recommend her to continue these studies in her further professional development.

6. Dissemination of the scientific results

Citations: a reference from the library of MU-Varna certifies 41 citations: 3 in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases, 2 in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review and 36 citations in non-refereed journals with scientific review. Assoc. Prof. Paraskeva Mancheva receives 245 points with minimal national requirements - 100 points.

Introducing the targeted audience to the results: in the works of Assoc. Prof. Mancheva, one important principle is observed - to approach the interested institutions and/or persons in order to get acquainted with problems or results. In doing so, the candidate contributes to the formation of civil education, as is necessary in the examination of hypotheses relating to vulnerable groups in society. Participation in joint meetings and discussions with disabled patients, mothers of children with disabilities, as well as with experts in the social field is evidence of this.

Another important channel for disseminating of the results are the very specific and precisely addressed proposals to the responsible institutions based on her research activities.

7. Assessment of the academic and teaching activities

Assoc. Prof. Mancheva has extensive teaching experience, not only in duration (20 years, 2 months, 7 days), but also in variety of the audience: students (doctors, kinesitherapists, rehabilitators), masters, doctors. She has received training in interactive methods and applies them in her teaching work. Her academic workload over the past 4 years is respectively 339, 321, 342, 317 hours, which significantly exceeds minimal requirements of 100 hours for the occupation of AP "Professor" in the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules of the Medical University – Varna.

Over the years, the disciplines taught by Assoc. Prof. Mancheva reveal three areas: general medicine with an emphasis on the integrating role of the GP; physiotherapy and rehabilitation methods; medical examination with labor and insurance law. Their coincidence to a large extent with the directions in her research work is a premise for the latter's achievements in the study halls.

Assoc. Prof. Mancheva is an erudite and authoritative lecturer.

Assoc. Prof. Mancheva is the author of the textbook "Expertise of working capacity" (2018) intended for students, doctors and all interested in the problem. It is the first study guide on working capacity expertise and not only fills in the gap, but gives ideas for the structuring, enriching and developing of a new discipline. The textbook is developed in four modules. Its significance is important because:

- presents in an accessible manner the legal regulation of the problem and the procedure for the realization of the disabled person's rights;
- for the first time in recent years, draws attention to the preventive and occupational function of the structures engaged in the expertise of working capacity;
- emphasizes the implementation of the European principle in the overall process of "rehabilitation-integration-return to the labor market" instead of disability pension;
- the expert's decision is seen as a tool for the improvement of the health and social politics.

The innovative and practical nature of the textbook contributes to the author's medical and legal qualifications and, above all, to her long-term observations and in-depth research on the system of work capacity expertise in our country. Its content is further evidence of the candidate's desire to link her her research work with her teaching activities.

To her academic and teaching activities we must add her work on the preparation of her doctoral students. She is the supervisor of four PhD students, three of whom successfully defended their dissertations, and one, enrolled less than a year ago, who continues to work. At this point, the candidate exceeds the requirements of MU-Varna for the occupation of the scientific position "Professor".

Conclusion

The full compliance with the criteria set out in the Academic Staff Development Act in Republic of Bulgaria (2018) and the Rules for its implementation and the Rules of the Medical University-Varna, the qualitative characteristics of the candidate's scientific activity and the significant contributions from the cognitive-theoretical, methodological and practical nature, as well as her many years of teaching experience, are grounds for my positive assessment.

I am convinced that by taking the position for which she is aspiring, she will be able to further develop her creative potential as a researcher, teacher and manager and will be useful in the development of MU-Varna.

I propose that the honorable members of the Scientific Jury also vote positively and propose to the Rector of MU-Varna, **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paraskeva Mancheva Draganova, MD, PhD, DSc to occupy the academic position of "Professor"** in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Organisation of Health Care and Pharmacy (expertise of working capacity)", for the needs of the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Faculty of Public Health.

5th of November 2019

Reviewer:



Prof. Dr. Nevyana Feschieva, MD, PhD