

To the Chairman of the Scientific Jury  
of Medical University "Prof. Dr Paraskev Stoyanov"- Varna  
Appointed by Order # P-109-176/23.04.2021

To the Rector of the University

**Regarding: Competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in higher education field 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine and scientific specialty Pediatrics, for the needs of the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, MU - Varna, and the Clinic of Pediatric Clinical Hematology and Oncology at University Hospital St Marina- Varna (published in *State Gazette*, issue 17 on 26.02.2020)**

**Candidate: Dr. Milena Ivanova Belcheva, MD**

## STATEMENT OF OPINION

**By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maria Ivanova Spasova, MD  
Department of Pediatrics and Medical Genetics, MU Plovdiv**

On the materials submitted for the Competition to award the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in higher education field 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine and scientific specialty Pediatrics, for the needs of the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, MU - Varna, and the Clinic of Pediatric Clinical Hematology and Oncology at University Hospital St Marina- Varna (published in *State Gazette*, issue 17 on 26.02.2021)

I present this Statement of Opinion in my capacity as a member of the Scientific Jury, appointed in accordance with Order # P-109-176 / 23.04.2021 of the Rector of Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" - Varna. I have been appointed to present an opinion by Record # 1 of 2021 from the session of the Scientific Jury.

### **1. Professional and scientific biography of the candidate**

Dr. Milena Ivanova Belcheva, MD, PhD graduated from the Fourth Language School "Frederic Joliot Curie" - Varna in 1979. She graduated with honors from the High Medical Institute – Varna in 1985. Between 1985 and 1986, she worked as a district pediatrician at the Children's Polyclinic at the Regional Hospital in Shumen. After a competition she was elected to be a resident doctor at the Department of Pediatrics of the Higher Medical Institute - Varna (1986-1989). In 1992, after another competition she was appointed as an Assistant at the Department of Pediatrics of the Higher Medical Institute - Varna. Between 1992 and 1993, she worked at the Pediatric Pulmonology Clinic, and since 1993 she has been working as an assistant professor at the Department of Pediatrics and as a medical doctor at the University Hospital Saint Marina in Varna. She first held the position of assistant professor and then that of senior assistant professor.

In 2020, Dr. Belcheva defended her dissertation *Cardiac impairment, cardiometabolic risk and bone health among survivors of childhood haematological malignancies*, and obtained the educational and scientific degree of *Doctor of Pediatrics* (diploma # 380/22.05.2020).

Dr. M. Belcheva has three medical specialities: Pediatrics (1991), Oncology (2004), and Pediatric Clinical Hematology and Oncology (2006). She specialized at the Clinic of Pediatrics, the Clinic of Oncology, and at the National Center of Oncology, Sofia. Between 1998 and 2000 she specialized in Pediatric Oncology at the at the Département de Pédiatrie, Institut Gustave-Roussy, Villejuif, Paris, France, with a scholarship from the French government. After a theoretical examination and defending a thesis titled „Role of the fine needle aspiration biopsy for the diagnosis

of pediatric renal tumors“, she graduated from the Universite Paris XI with a diploma in Pediatric Oncology. She has taken courses in tumor treatment, solid tumors in children, pain management and palliative care, rare types of anemia, and hemophilia.

Dr. Milena Belcheva is a member of the Bulgarian Pediatric Association, the Bulgarian Medical Association, the Bulgarian Association of Hematology, the Bulgarian Association of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology, the European Hematology Association (EHA), the European Society for Pediatric Oncology (SIOPE), Societe Francaise de lutte contre les Cancers et des leucemies de l'enfant et de l'adolescents (SFCE).

## **2. Normative documentation for the candidate's participation in the competition**

The candidate has supplied all of the documents required for the competition: an autobiography, copies of her PhD diploma, a list of and copies of her publications and scientific studies, a list of her participation in scientific conferences and congresses both in Bulgaria and abroad, a certified list of her citations that has been issued by the Library of Medical University-Varna, her impact factor coefficient, and the author's review of the scientific contributions of her published works.

## **3. Scientific work**

### **Scientometric Indicators**

Dr. M. Belcheva participates in the competition with a total of 40 studies. In addition to these, she has also supplied a list of the reports and posters with which she has participated in national and international forums. She has supplied 40 studies for review, and they consist of 31 full-text publications in journals (30 of which were published in Bulgarian journals and 1 in an international journal with an impact factor), 4 summaries published in international journals (with impact factor), 5 publications in edited handbooks. Her full-text publications in scientific journals and compilations exceed the minimum required for the title of Associate Professor by 9.

The candidate is the first or sole author of 20 publications (50%): sole author of 6 studies and first author of 14 publications. She is the second author of 10 publications, and third author (or more) of another 10 publications. She has presented posters or reports in 89 national and international scientific forums. She is the first author of 20 (22.5%) of these posters and reports. She has published 5 summaries in Bulgarian journals, 2 abstracts in international journals, 48 summaries in Bulgarian handbooks, 22 summaries in international handbooks, and 12 of her abstracts have not been published.

According to the documents prepared by the library of Medical University – Varna, dr. Belcheva has 15 citations in international journals, which total 210 points. The impact factor of the journals, in which she has published, is 18.48.

### **Thematic areas and contributions**

Dr. Belcheva's primary clinical interests have to do with the contemporary methods of diagnosis and treatment of solid tumors and lymphomas in pediatric oncology; rare malignancies in children; the evaluation and treatment of pain in oncology; palliative care; and the late effects of the treatment of childhood neoplasms.

Dr. Milena Belcheva's scientific contributions can be grouped in several categories: 1) The late effects of the treatment of childhood malignancies and the follow-up of patients in long remission; 2) Solid tumors in children; 3) Malignant childhood homeopathies; 4) Urgent conditions and

complications in childhood malignancies and their treatment; 5) Benign hemopathies (see the attached detailed reference).

Dr. Belcheva's dissertation is the first complex study of patients with childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia and Hodgkin's lymphoma in long-term remission in Bulgaria. The results of her dissertation are especially significant to both the scientific study and the treatment of such patients, as they supply concrete instructions about the long-term follow-up on these patients with the purpose of medically intervening to ensure that they remain in good health after their treatment.

Her publications in scientific journals are in-depth and comprehensive studies on issues relevant and significant to the diagnosis, treatment, therapeutic results, and complications of some of the most frequent childhood malignancies.

### **Participation in projects**

In the period between 2007 and 2014, dr. Belcheva coordinated the international project "Training of health care assistants at General Hospital St Marina," in partnership with Saint Michel Training Center at Groupe Hospitalier «Saint Augustin», Malestroit, France, and Medical University-Varna. As a coordinator of this international project, Dr. M. Belcheva actively participated in the development and adaptation of the program designed to train health care assistants. Based on this pilot project, MU Varna received a license for training in the professions of *Health Care Assistant and Carer*.

### **4. Teaching and treatment activity**

Dr. Milena Belcheva has taught Pediatrics to medical students for more than 29 years. She continues teaching the Elective Course of Pediatrics and is engaged in teaching the postgraduate qualification in Pediatric Oncohematology. The candidate's average teaching load over the past three years has totaled 214, 222, and 248 hours (the norm is 126 hours).

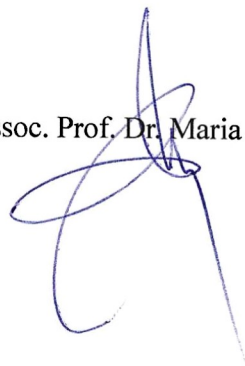
Dr. Belcheva has worked as a pediatrician for more than 30 years. Most of this experience has taken place in the Clinic of Pediatric Clinical Hematology and Oncology.

### **5. Conclusions**

Based on the facts that I have reviewed in the sections above, I believe that the candidate's professional qualifications and scientific and teaching activities completely fulfill the requirements for promotion to the position of Associate Professor laid out in the Handbook of University "Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

I recommend that the scientific jury vote in favor of dr. Belcheva's promotion to the academic position 'Associate professor' at University "Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna in higher education field 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine and scientific specialty Pediatrics, for the needs of the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, MU - Varna, and the Clinic of Pediatric Clinical Hematology and Oncology at University Hospital St Marina- Varna, published in *State Gazette*, issue 17 or 26.02.2020.

Prepared by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maria Spasova, MD



23.06.2021  
Plovdiv