

REVIEW

By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nevyana Georgieva Feschieva

**For a contest procedure
for the academic position “Professor”
in the Field of higher education 7. Health and sports,
Professional field 7.1. Medicine,
Scientific specialty Social Medicine, Health and Pharmacy Organization,
Announced in State Gazette 18/02.2022**

I am appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury with Order of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna No R-109-162/ 14.04.2022, and at the first meeting of the Scientific Jury (Protocol No 1/29.04.2022) I have been appointed to prepare a review for the contest- procedure for occupying the academic position “Professor” in the scientific specialty “Social Medicine, Health and Pharmacy Organization”, Professional field 7.1., Medicine”, field of higher education 7. “ Health and Sports”.

The only candidate in the contest is Assoc. Dr. Klara Georgieva Dokova, MD

1. Brief biographical data and career development of the candidate.

Education: Graduate of the Language school, Dobrich - 1988; Graduate of the MU of Varna as a Master in Medicine in 1994. Second Master of Public Health acquired in 1996/97 at the University of Maastricht, the Netherlands. Specialty in Social Medicine and Health Organization since 1999. Acquired educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in 2009 after a successful defense of a dissertation entitled “Awareness, Treatment and Control of Blood Pressure among the Rural Population. Barriers for control" at the Specialized Scientific Council of the Higher Attestation Commission.

The professional career of the candidate began as a physician at the Department of Internal Medicine, Municipal Hospital Asparuhovo, Varna 1995/96. From 1999 to 2001 she works at the NGO Public Health-99” as a coordinator of a major international scientific project “Diet and Stroke - Varna”. From 2001 to 2012 she is an assistant, senior and chief assistant at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization, MU-Varna. In 2012 she is elected as an Associated professor at the same department where she continues to work till now. From 2014 to 2018 she is a Vice Dean of the Faculty of Public Health (FOZ) at MU-Varna, and from 2018 to 2020 Dean.

Participation in research projects (2013 to 2022): a leader of two national projects and one

international (of the Bulgarian team) project and a participant in six projects, including 4 international and 2 national. Collaborator for Bulgaria in the international network Global Burden of Disease Study and contact person for Varna for the WHO "Regions for health" network.

Participation in editorial boards of scientific journals: Social Medicine and Scripta Scientifica Salutis Publicae.

Membership in international and national scientific and professional organizations: European Association of Public Health (EUPHA), European Stroke Organization, Bulgarian Public Health Association (BAOS), Bulgarian National Society of Public Health, BLS, Public Health Care Association - 99, of which it is a long-standing member of the Management Board and engine of a number of initiatives.

Awards: "Pythagoras" prize for women in research for 2020.

General compliance of the candidate with the requirements of the Rules for the development of the academic staff of MU Varna and the announcement in the State Gazette:

	Requirements according art.100 of the Rules	Information for the candidate
1.	Acquired educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the same specialty	Yes, since 2009 in the field of the contest
2.	Educational workload not less than 100 hours on average for 4 years	Mean for 5 the last consecutive years -432,6 hours
3.	Monograph	Yes, issued in 2022 ISBN 978-619-221-373-2
4.	Original scientific and research works - not less than 25, which do not repeat those presented for the academic position „Assoc. Professor“	47, incl. monograph, textbook and dissertation
5.	Scientific supervisor of at least two PhD students who have successfully defended their scientific degree – in the same specialty	5 PhD students who defended successfully their degrees and 4 more working at present

For each of the requirements under art. 100 of the Rules for the development of the academic staff of MU-Varna, official evidence is presented.

The comparison of the information for Assoc. Prof. Dokova with the scientific criteria set out in the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University and with the specific requirements for the announced competition shows full compliance.

Research works, scientific criteria and scientific contributions

The scientific work of Assoc. Prof. Dokova is presented by 47 titles, divided into two lists.

I. I. Included in the reference for the fulfilment of the minimum requirements for the occupation of the Academic position “Professor”, according to the law:

Criterion A, 1 Dissertation work for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" – 1;

Criterion B, 3 Habilitation work - monograph – 1;

Criterion G 7 Publications in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases - 15;

Criterion G 8 Publications in journals with scientific review, unreferenced in world-famous databases - 18;

Criterion G, 9 Published chapter of a collective monograph in English - 1;

Criteria E 20 – textbook – 1;

II. Other than the evidence covering the minimum requirements for occupying the Academic Position “Professor” - 10 works

Minimum required points by groups of indicators for the academic position “Professor” according to the Law for the development of the Academic Staff and the Rules for the implementation of the law

Group of indicators	Content	Professor According to Law (number of points)	Klara Dokova
A	Criteria 1 – Dissertation work for „Doctoral“ degree	50	50
		-	
B	Criteria 3 or 4: Habilitation work, i.e. monograph, presented in relation to the habilitation procedure	100	100
G	Sum of indicators 5 to 9: Publications	200	411,05
D	Sum of indicators 10 to 12: Citations	100	240**
E	Sum of indicators 13 to 20	100*	450*

* E14 Professionals – mandatory minimum 80 points, the candidate’s points are 140

** The candidate has included in her academic reference citations that fulfill the minimum requirements for Prof. Professor AD, and the real citations under Web of Science are over 15000.

The points of Assoc. Prof. Dokova for indicators G, D, E significantly exceed the minimum required, determined by the qualitative characteristic of her research work.

The journals in which Assoc. Prof. Dokova published have an impact factor (IF) 1307,034 according to the Academic Report.

Qualitative characteristic of the research work of Assoc. Prof. Dokova

In addition to these two lists, she also attaches the scientific criteria with lists of the scientific works with which she has participated in the competition for occupying an academic degree "Assoc. Professor" as well as those related to her dissertation work for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". They complement the idea of the overall scientific development of the candidate, the trends in her choice of research topics, research methods and areas of application. The key words **epidemiology, blood pressure, control, population studies, health promotion** are an important characteristic of her work over the years. To them we need to add the methodical precision that she exhibits already with her first studies, but develops to the extent that her works should be a benchmark for good research practice, followed by PhD students and colleagues. This makes her a preferred partner in a number of international studies and, first and foremost, in the large-scale study "The Global Burden of Disease Study". This is the topic to which her monograph is also dedicated.

Assoc. Prof. Dokova has systematized her scientific works published after the Academic Position "Assoc. Professor" in four areas:

1. Assessment of population health and health inequalities through indicators of morbidity, mortality and burden of disease
2. Prevention and promotion of health
3. Medical Sociology
4. Training of public health professionals

The first area is best presented, with the highest number of studies that assess the health on populational level with morbidity, mortality and burden of disease indicators. The habilitation work "Burden of disease studies. Analysis of the burden of disease in Bulgaria 1990-2019" is also dedicated to that problem, which for the first time in Bulgaria systematically presents the summary measures as an opportunity to compare health losses from diseases, traumas and risk factors by age and gender for the population of the world and that of individual regions, countries and districts in them. A complex assessment of the burden of disease in Bulgaria for the period 1990-

2019 is performed, based on the latest results of the Global Burden of Disease it provides new knowledge about the ranking of risk factors, shifts in priorities, assessments of achievements, guidance for actions.

The estimated health losses associated with hypertensive heart disease in Bulgaria for the period 1990-2019 show an often overlooked, important cause of disease burden from the cardiovascular disease group.

The analyses of the burden of disease in Bulgaria are a good example of writing and a source of ideas for every future public health researcher. But they also, as well as the whole work, are an example of dedication to scientific work - a huge work to study sources and conducted own research, a talent for synthesizing, presenting in a very readable form, multi-layered problems, presenting important associations and proposals for new, adequate political health solutions. The habilitation work of Assoc. Prof. Dokova has a fundamental theoretical significance for assessing the population health in Bulgaria and hopefully for new approaches for decisions and actions.

Assoc. Prof. Dokova contributes the idea - more systematic research on regional health inequalities in to start Bulgaria to as an approach to theoretical conclusions and to contribute to regionally focused health policy. This problem is already emerging as a direction of a team from the Department of Social Medicine G7.2, G7.5, G8.1, G8.2

Strokes, a long-standing important focus in the research work of the candidate, are assessed through the disease load on their three main pathological types on a global and regional level in a series of publications. The contribution of the burden of disease of strokes to health inequalities between Western and Central/Eastern Europe – G7.3, G7.4, G7.6, G7.14

In a series of publications, the international experience in the development of registers for chronic diseases and in particular: registers of diabetes, diabetic retinopathy (RDI) and strokes was studied and presented. G7.9, D7.11, D7.12, G7.13,

In the second scientific area "Prevention and promotion of health" are presented the idea and opportunities for practical realization of the concept of health promotion by applying the principles in the so-called "places for health promotion" and more specifically the establishment of the global network of universities for health; socio-psychological models applied for studying and impacting on health-related behavior. G8.5, G8.7, G8.8, G8.9, G8.13, G8.14

In the third direction "Medical Sociology" is included the first Bulgarian textbook (K.Dokova, 2022) examining the application of the main sociological theories for the analysis of problems in the field of medicine and health. It represents a novelty in our medical-sociological literature and will have significance for expanding the knowledge of students, doctors and other

specialists regarding contemporary sociological problems of medicine and health care.

Questions about social status and professional satisfaction of different categories of health professionals are also considered.

In the fourth direction, the training of public health professionals is considered, as well as Bachelor “Assistant Pharmacists” in a European context. (G7.1, G7.6, D8.6, G8.10, G8.18, P6)

The research work of Assoc. Dokova is distinguished by innovation in themes and methods, combining theoretical problems and opportunities for practical application at different working and management levels.

I agree with the contributions presented by her in the different areas, besides the sparing words.

The dissemination of the results of the research work of the candidate is performed through participation in international, national and regional scientific forums (30 in total for the period 2013-2022, including 12 international and 18 national) and a significant, diverse range of foreign and Bulgarian journals in which she publishes. The 16 citations in prestigious and famous magazines, as well as the very high impact factor are the reason to believe that the research achievements of the candidate are well known to the target audience.

Assessment of the teaching activity of the candidate

Based on the presented materials for the procedure, as well as my long-term observations on the activities of the Faculty of Public Health at the MU-Varna, I find it appropriate, the activity of Assoc. Prof. Klara Dokova in this field to be considered in two aspects – in an individual plan – as workload, led study disciplines and in a second plan – in her capacity as a leader and organizer of the public health education at the MU-Varna.

1. Individually, Assoc. prof. Dokova has over 20 years of teaching experience teaching a wide range of subjects from the group of social medicine, public health, epidemiology and statistics to medical and dental students and almost all specialties of the FPH, both Bachelors and Masters. In the last 5 years she has been lecturing on the disciplines: Social medicine and biostatistics; Introduction to epidemiology; Applied epidemiology and health promotion; Medical sociology, sociology of health and disease; Medical and social aspects of disabilities; Indicators and public health assessment; Introduction to public health. Practical classes in Epidemiology, Introduction to Public Health, Social Medicine and Biostatistics, Medical Sociology and Medico-Social Aspects of Disabilities. Her study workload in the last 5 school

years (since 2016/17 years by 2020/21) is respectively: 557, 497, 317, 264, 528 or an annual average of 432.6, which is significantly above the norm of 180 hours. Not included in the academic workload are: the postgraduate courses “Design of research and statistical analyses” and the work with graduates – in the period 2013-2021. She is the scientific leader of 18 graduates. Under her leadership, 5 dissertations are defended, and there are four more in the process of preparation. Behind these figures is the systematic, responsible work with the PhD students to perform with content the educational and scientific degree they receive.

As an organizer of the PH education and training in the FPH, Assoc. Prof Dokova showed visionary qualities and reasonably expanded the portfolio of the Bachelor’s and Master’s programs of the FPH. She was the initiator for the Master’s program in Public Health Protection and Control aimed at professional bachelors “Public Health Inspector”, which is a serious step in the stabilization of that important public health personnel. She has special merits for the opening of a Bachelor’s program in Logopedia and a Master’s program in Clinical Speech Therapy, specialties of great importance for children, adults and sick people. Her support for the introduction of new specialties at the FPH is related to real research work – from a study of the needs in Bulgaria, evaluation of international experience and its suitability, design of programs and curricula, work with teams, finding suitable international partners and a lot of work. I note all this with respect for this work, which often remains underappreciated.

Personal impressions: I know Assoc. Prof Dokova from her first steps in the scientific field - exact, honorable, self-demanding and with an exceptional desire for self-improvement and learning, which does not subside today when she is an established, respected, highly qualified specialist. She is a leader in the medico-social community in our country, known, accepted and appreciated in the international scientific circles with which she is professionally in contact. A highly erudite person and a supportive colleague, she remains a laborer and an artist. She has achieved the scientific and moral criteria that have long guaranteed her the academic position of “Professor”.

Conclusion

The analysis of the overall scientific and educational activity of Assoc. Prof. Dokova shows that she meets all the criteria of the Law for the Development of the Academic staff and the Rules at the MU Varna MU Varna for the occupation of the Academic Position Professor. Her scientific achievements are well known in the international scientific community, reflected in international prestigious editions with a high impact factor. Her work is distinguished by its

relevance, innovation and creation of new scientific directions. Her scientific contributions are theoretic-cognitive, methodological and practical. Authoritative educator and efficient organizer of Public Health education. I am confidently voting "positively" and I appeal to the other members of the Scientific Jury to vote Assoc. Prof. Klara Dokova, MD, MD, to obtain the Academic Position "Professor" at the MU Varna in the specialty Social Medicine and Organization of Health and Pharmacy, professional field 7.1. Medicine in the field of higher education 7. Health and sports.

Reviewer:

Assoc. Prof. N. Feschieva

