

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vanya Atanasova Boycheva (Birdanova)
Department of Hygiene, Medical Ecology, Occupational Diseases and Disaster Medicine,
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Regarding: /SUBJECT: competition for the academic position of " PROFESSOR", a field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sport, a professional field 7.1. Medicine, scientific specialty/subject "Hygiene" (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.) at the Hygiene and Epidemiology Department, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov”-Varna.

I. GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE PROCEDURE

According to Order № R-109-260/23.06.22 of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna and Protocol № 185 /19.05.22 from a meeting of the Faculty Council at the Faculty of Public Health I was elected as a member of the Scientific Jury, and with Protocol № 1 /05.07.22 I was selected to present an opinion in connection with a competition for the academic position of "PROFESSOR" at University of Varna in the scientific specialty "Hygiene" (including occupational, communal, school, radiation, etc.).

The only candidate is Assoc. Prof. Darina Naydenova Hristova MD, PhD.

Darina Naydenova, has submitted all necessary documents in compliance with the requirements of the Law for Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for Development of the Academic Staff of MU-Varna for participation in the announced competition.

I. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANDIDATE

Darina Naydenova was born in the town of Provadia. She graduated in 2000 at the Medical University-Varna. She has diploma in a medical specialty “Nutrition and Dietetics” since 2010. Her PhD Dissertation was defended in 2015.

The candidate began her professional career in 2001 as a resident physician at IHS "Fr. Joliot-Curie". From 2002 to 2003, she worked at a senior expert of the National Institute of Health and Welfare - Varna. The academic development of Assoc. Prof. Naydenova is related to Medical University - Varna, where since 2003 she has successively held the positions of a part-time assistant, an assistant, senior assistant, chief assistant in the Department of "Hygiene and Disaster Medicine", and since 2015 is an associate professor at the Department of “Hygiene and Epidemiology”. Since 2020, she is the head of the "Hygiene" sector at the same department.

Assoc. Prof. Naydenova has undergone a number of qualification and pedagogical courses, as well as specialized training, mainly in the field of nutrition, dietetics and nutrigenomics, which have supported her professional development as an excellent researcher and academic teacher.

Darina Naydenova's record shows that the candidate has met the minimum national requirements (MNR) under Art. 2b of the Law on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for taking up the academic position of “PROFESSOR”, which can be

seen from the table below (Table 1).

Table 1. Information on compliance with the minimum national requirements

Group of indicators	Contents	PROFESSOR (number of points)	Points of Assoc. Prof. Darina Naydenova
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicators 3 or 4	100	100
C	Sum of points for indicator 5 - 9	200	212
D	Sum of points for indicator 10-12	100	125
E	Sum of points for indicator 13-22	100	243.29

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF SCIENTIFIC WORK

Publication activity and citations

Assoc. Prof. Naydenova participates in the competition with **32** scientific publications. Of these, full-text articles in referenced and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science journals - **6** publications, articles in non-referenced journals with a scientific review and in edited collections - **9** publications, **1** dissertation work for educational and academic degree “Doctor”, **1** monograph (habilitation thesis) on the topic "Eating disorders. Aspects of the Clinical Practice of the Doctor of Nutrition and Dietetics", **3** textbooks and **3** teaching materials.

In addition, Assoc. Prof. Naydenova has presented also **9** full-text publications (**5** of them referenced and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science journals), beyond the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "Professor".

The total number of citations with which Assoc. Prof. Naydenova participates in this competition is **12**, of which **6** citations is in referred and indexed journals in world-famous databases with scientific information (Scopus and Web of Science), **2** in a monograph and collective volumes and **4** in non-referred journals.

Assoc. Prof. Naydenova is a reviewer of articles in scientific journals such as the “Journal of IMAB”. “Journal of Biomedical and Clinical Research” (JBCR), Scientific Publications of the Union of Scientists - Varna, “Medicine and Ecology” series, etc.

Main scientific contributions

The scientific contributions of Assoc. Prof. Naydenova are original and scientifically applicable. They can be classified into seven thematic chapters:

1. Eating attitudes and alternative eating patterns.
2. Vitamin D in the genesis of obesity and its role as an epigenetic factor
3. Nutritional recommendations in the maternal and early childhood periods
4. Food allergies in infancy
5. Nutrition, nutritional status and physical activity in adolescents
6. Functional foods and beverages
7. Nutrition, health risk and dietary culture among consumers.

The first chapter, Eating Attitudes and Alternative Eating Patterns, summarizes current scientific data on the etiology, diagnostic criteria, laboratory biomarkers, psychopathology, clinical symptomatology, complications, and treatment options for anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, orthorexia nervosa, muscular dysmorphia, and compulsive eating. There were formulated screening tools to recognize subclinical forms of eating disorders, which is of the most importance for their prevention, early diagnosis and successful therapy of these conditions. Furthermore, there were outlined algorithms for solving specific diagnostic and therapeutic tasks, which are based on systematized results of actual medical cases from the clinical practice of the candidate. The second chapter focuses on the involvement of vitamin D in the genesis of obesity and its role as an epigenetic factor. In the chapters "Nutritional recommendations in the maternal and early childhood periods", "Food allergies in infancy", and "Nutrition, nutritional status and physical activity in adolescents" there were investigated the nutrition and nutritional status during different physiological states and age periods - maternity, infancy, early childhood and adolescence. Furthermore, there was presented the current scientific evidence on the role of healthy eating in protecting the health of Bulgarian children and adolescents. Attention is drawn to the risks of developing specific nutritional deficiencies due to inadequate intake of protein and micronutrients (n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, vit. D, B₉, B₁₂, iron, calcium, fibre, etc.) in the studied age groups, as well as the approaches for overcoming them. Of particular interest in the "Functional Foods and Beverages" chapter is a scientific publication that examines coffee consumption in workers exposed to noise and vibration. In the last chapter "Nutrition, health risk and dietary culture among consumers", there were analyzed the contemporary issues of biological and chemical hazards in food.

I confirm all the contributions of Assoc. Prof. Naydenova. They are correctly formulated according to their scientific fields and accurately characterize the profile of the scientific works presented in the academic transcript.

Scientific activity

For the period 2015-2022, Assoc. Prof. Naydenova has presented the results of her research in over **60** scientific reports delivered at prestigious national and international congresses and conferences. Assoc. Prof. Naydenova is a leader, leading researcher and participant in a significant number of scientific-research projects in the field of nutrition, food and food safety. He also participates in national educational project with European funding as an academic mentor.

Darina Naydenova is a member of the BMA, European Public Health Association (EUPHA), Bulgarian Association Public Health (BAPH), Bulgarian Society of Nutrition and Dietetics, National Breastfeeding Support Association, National Breastfeeding Committee.

IV. TEACHING ACTIVITY

Assoc. Prof. Haydenova has a work experience in the field of the specialty over of 18 years, of which her teaching experience is over 17 years. The average workload amount of the candidate for the last 4 years is 338 hours/year and significantly exceeds the established standard for MU-Varna. Her teaching activities include Bulgarian language and Russian language training in various master's and bachelor's programs in the following disciplines: "Hygiene and Ecology", "Hygiene and Epidemiology", "Environment and Health", "Environment, Nutrition and Health", "Nutrition and health", "Nutrition and dietetics", "Nutrition hygiene", "Food safety. Food legislation", "Pharmacy-medical aspects of nutrition". He is the author and co-author of 3 textbooks and 3 teaching materials that are used to teach students hygiene and ecology for the specialties of pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, for medical colleges, etc.

Assoc. Prof. Naydenova is the Chairman of the state examination committee for the acquisition of the medical specialty "Nutrition and Dietetics". The candidate is the author of a course on the postgraduate training program "Eating disorders-a problem of the 21st century. Possibilities for influence and therapy". In addition, she is a lecturer in a number of other courses of SDO. Prof. Naydenova works very actively with trainee doctors, nutrition and dietetics specialists, graduates and PhD students. Assoc. Prof. Naydenova is **the supervisor of 8 PhD students in doctoral programs** in "Hygiene", **2** of whom have successfully defended their dissertations. He is the academic supervisor of **12** graduates from the master's programs of the FMG, OKOZ, RMUS.

V. EXPERT ACTIVITIES

Assoc. Prof. Naydenova provides methodological supports to young scientists and PhD students for their scientific developments in the field of environment and nutrition, nutrition and health. The candidate is an expert in the field of nutrition and dietetics and a lecturer in national and international forums for continuing medical education, organized by Nestle Academy for Professional Excellence in Pediatrics, Forum Medicus, Nestle Nutrition Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia, Bulgarian Medical Homeopathic Organization. Assoc. Prof. Naydenova is a speaker at patient forums and conferences of a number of non-governmental organizations.

Assoc. Prof. Naydenova is the deputy chairman of the Alumni Club at the University of Varna. Darina Naydenova received an award - the bearer of the "Badge of Honor Blue Ribbon" - a collective award for the management of the Alumni Club and Friends of the MU - Varna for 2022.

CONCLUSION

Based on the submitted materials for participation in the competition, I can say that Associate Professor Dr. Darina Naydenova Hristova, MD, PhD fully covers the indicators and requirements for occupying the academic position "PROFESSOR", set out in the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for Development of the Academic Staff at MU-Varna. Assoc. Professor Darina Naydenova has scientific contributions with high practical potential, long-term teaching experience and established authority on a national scale.

Therefore, I confidently give my positive vote and offer to the members of the honorable Scientific Jury to award the academic position of "PROFESSOR" to associate professor Dr. Darina Naydenova Hristova, MD, PhD in the scientific specialty "Hygiene" (incl. labor, communal, school, radiation, etc.) at the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Faculty of "Public Health", Medical University - Varna.

29. 07.2022

With respect:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vanya Boycheva (Birdanova), PhD