

## Statement

By Prof. Dr Georgi Panov, MD, PhD, DSc  
University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" Burgas

**Regarding:** Announced competition for the acquisition of the academic position "**associate professor**" in the specialty "**Psychiatry**", professional direction 7.1. "**Medicine**", field of higher education 7. "Health and sport" - one, 0.5 full-time position for the Department of "Psychiatry and Medical Psychology" ", Faculty of Medicine and 1 full-time position for the Second Psychiatric Clinic at UMBAL "St. Marina" EAD-Varna in connection with an advertisement published in State Gazette No. 28 / 28.03.2023.

### Information about the procedure

According to order No. R-109-267/25.05.2023. of the Rector of the Medical University - Varna, on the basis of art. 4, paragraph 1 and paragraph. 2 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), art. 57, para. 1 and para. 2 of the Implementing Regulations of ZRASRB, art. 6, para. 1, art. 127, para. 1 and para. 2 of the Regulations for the development of the academic staff in MU-Varna and decision according to protocol No. 02/04.05.2023. of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine and protocol No. 1/07.06.2023. from a meeting of the scientific jury.

My opinion is in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for its application and the Regulations of the Medical University - Varna.

### Professional data about the candidate

Dr. Zhivko Apostolov was born on June 7, 1986. Graduated from medicine in 2010. at Medical University-Varna. Since 2011 is a doctoral student at the Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology at the Medical University of Varna. 2012 started working in the Second Psychiatric Clinic at the "St. Marina"-Varna, continuing until now. In 2014 defended a dissertation on the topic "On some changes in brain asymmetry in schizophrenia" at the University of Varna and obtained the educational and scientific degree "PhD" in the scientific specialty "Psychiatry". 2016 has acquired the specialty "Psychiatry". Honorary lecturer at the Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology - MU-Varna in the period 2018/2019. Assistant since 2019. He is currently the main assistant at the Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology-MU-Varna and the Second Psychiatric Clinic.

### Assessment of scientific indicators

A report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the rules of MU-Varna, prepared in the Library of MU-Varna, based on information provided by the applicant and the automated information from international scientific databases, has been provided. The publication activity of Dr. Zhivko Apostolov meets the scientometric requirements for holding the academic position "Associate Professor", and includes: Dissertation work for the award of the ONS "Doctor", Habilitation

work - monograph, Scientific publications in journals with/without SJR and/or IF and collections - 15, Chapters in University textbooks - 1 co-authored, Participation in scientific forums - 7, Number of citations reflecting scientific activity - 11.

Of the full-text scientific publications in journals - 4 are in English, 11 in Bulgarian. Dr. Zhivko Apostolov is the independent author of 5 of them; first author in 6 and fourth in 2.

### **Main directions of scientific works**

*The first thematic area is Schizophrenia (D.7.1; D.8.2; D.8.3; D.8.4; D.8.9).* A series of 3 reviews and 2 self-reported articles (G.7.1; G8.9) respectively discuss changes in prescribing patterns of antipsychotics and other psychotropic drugs for first-episode schizophrenia between 2005 and 2015 period of introduction of the main SGAs and their generic versions available; presented a clinical case discussing differential-diagnostic problems between schizophrenia and a form of encephalitis; a review of new and future pharmacotherapeutic options in schizophrenia, as well as the options for psychotherapeutic interventions in the treatment of schizophrenia.

*The second thematic area is Evolutionary Psychiatry (C.3. Monograph; Publication D.8.1).* In the habilitation thesis "Evolutionary Psychiatry, A Different Look at Schizophrenia and Psychopathology", the author emphasizes the evolutionary factors that play a role in the emergence of psychopathology. The monograph examines evolutionary theories relevant to most mental illnesses, with a primary focus on schizophrenia.

In the article (D8.1) Schizophrenia - an evolutionary perspective, the author discusses these views in the same spirit and shares his own data from his dissertation work in this direction.

*The third thematic area is Philosophy and Psychiatry (Publication D.7.2).* The presented review discusses philosophical issues regarding embodied cognition and the importance of the physical body in cognitive abilities and its interaction with the environment. The concept of impaired embodied cognition offers opportunities for new treatment strategies through psychotherapy and body-centered interventions, and may eventually offer biomarkers for diagnosis.

*The fourth topic area is Depression and Anxiety Disorders (Publications D.8.5; D.8.6; D.8.7; D.8.8; D.8.11; D.8.12).* In the reviews presented, problems of practical importance in clinical practice are discussed, such as: the methods of personalized medicine in the treatment of depressive disorders; the possible relationship between mitral valve prolapse and panic disorder; improving the identification of depression and other mental disorders in patients with diabetes and ensuring adequate, complex treatment; the main therapeutic challenges in the treatment of anxiety disorders during pregnancy and lactation, the relationship between irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety and depression.

*The fifth thematic area is Brain Asymmetry (A.1. Dissertation work).* In the dissertation work for the award of the ONS "Doctor on the topic "On some changes in brain asymmetry in schizophrenia" (A1), the author emphasized that for the first time in our country an attempt was made to reveal deficits in lateralized cognitive functions in patients with schizophrenia, the frequency of non-right-handedness (left-handedness) among patients with schizophrenia was investigated and compared with that in the Bulgarian population. The assumptions that left-hemispheric and right-hemispheric dysfunction coexist in schizophrenia were confirmed. Hypothetical projections of brain asymmetry in the diathesis-stress model for schizophrenia were proposed.

The academic reference includes a full-text publication beyond the minimum scientometric requirements for the appointment of AP "Associate Professor", in which the

simultaneous use of some first- and second-generation antipsychotic drugs in patients with various types of cancer is discussed in the form of an overview as a new therapeutic option.

The provided scientific production is sufficient in volume and quality for participation in the competition.

### **Conclusion**

Dr. Zhivko Pavlinov Apostolov, PhD is a teacher, clinician and researcher. Its indicators for research, teaching and clinical activity fully **meet** the requirements of the Recommended Criteria of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University - Varna.

Due to the above, I am convinced that I give my positive opinion and urge the honorable members of the Scientific Jury to vote positively for the awarding of the academic position "associate professor", professional direction 7.1. "Medicine", field of higher education 7. "Health care and sports" for the Department of "Psychiatry" and Medical Psychology", Faculty of Medicine-MU-Varna and Second Psychiatric Clinic at the St. Marina UMBAL EAD-Varna.

20.08.2023r.

Prepared the Statement:   
/ Prof. Dr. Georgi Panov, MD, PhD, DSc /