

STATEMENT

By Prof. Dr. Mariana Dimitrova Arnaudova-Zhekova, MD, PhD
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Head of Third Psychiatric clinic – University Hospital St. Marina - Varna

According to order No. R-109-270/25.05.2023 of the Rector of the MU – Varna and based on The Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the regulations of Medical University – Varna and decision with Protocol No. 2/04.05.2023 of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine and Protocol No. 1/07.06.2023 from the first meeting of the scientific jury.

Regarding: Competition for the academic position of **Professor** in the scientific specialty **Child and Adolescent Psychiatry** in the field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.1. Medicine, for the needs of the Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology at the Faculty of Medicine, MU – Varna and Fourth Psychiatric Clinic of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry – University Hospital St. Marina Varna, announced in SG no. 28/28.03.2023.

Candidate (single): **Associate Professor Petar Milchev Petrov, MD, PhD, DSc**, Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology at the Faculty of Medicine, MU – Varna and Fourth Psychiatric Clinic of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry – University Hospital St. Marina Varna

Assoc. Prof. Petar Milchev Petrov was born on 03.11.1971. He graduated in 1995 at Medical University - Varna. Since 2004 has acquired the specialty of "Psychiatry", since 2010 - "Child Psychiatry" and since 2016 - "Forensic Psychiatry". Since 2018, he is a "Doctor of Sciences" in the scientific specialty "Psychiatry". Since 2015 is an Associate Professor at the Department of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology at the Medical University of Varna and Head of the Fourth Clinic "Child and Adolescent Psychiatry" at the "St. Marina" University Hospital - Varna.

Assoc. Prof. Petar Petrov is a member of:

- Bulgarian Medical Association
- Bulgarian Psychiatric Association
- President elected of Bulgarian Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions.

He has excellent command of written and spoken English.

Assoc. Prof. Petrov's teaching activities are related to Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Medical Psychology for Bulgarian speaking students. His academic load exceeds the requirements according to the standards.

He has so far been the supervisor of five interns who acquired a specialty in Child Psychiatry. He has also been the supervisor of three PhD students.

The applicant owns scientific profiles in:

SCOPUS Author ID -56041364500

ORCID -0000-0002-6107-1879

Google Scholar

ResearchGate

Evaluation of research activity

The applicant submits a report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the regulations 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, in accordance with the Regulations for the implementation of the law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the development of the academic staff of the Medical University - Varna. According to the presented report, Associate Professor Petar Milchev Petrov, PhD, meets the requirements for holding the academic position "Professor".

The total number of scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Petar Petrov from the report submitted includes:

- Abstract of PhD dissertation
- Abstract of second dissertation - DSc dissertation
- Monography work
- Full-text scientific publications - 42
- Textbook chapters - 10
- Abstracts at international and national scientific forums – 10
- Number of citations reflecting scientific activity – 115

From the Full-text scientific publications – 13 are in English and 10 of these relate to international projects in ICMH Study Group and Child psychiatry research conducted to date in the general population involving 10 countries. In the presented scientific works, Assoc. Prof. Petar Petrov is the first author of 12 publications in journals and 6 of the chapters in textbooks.

For reference in this competition are:

- PhD Dissertation work on the topic: Study of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. MU – Varna, 2012
- Obtained scientific degree "Doctor of Medical Sciences": 10-year follow-up of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Varna region, 2018
- Monograph paper: Eating Disorders in childhood and adolescence. Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa, Varna, 2022
- Full Text Publications published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world- databases of scientific information - 7
- Full Text Publications published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 6.
- citations reflecting scientific activity of the applicant - 115

The scientific developments of the author are in the scientific fields of Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Medical Psychology.

In general, the scientific directions of the published scientific works are in the fields of:

1. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
2. Eating Disorders in Childhood and Adolescence
3. Multinational studies of certain problems in Childhood and Adolescence in the general population
4. General presentation of features in the field of child psychiatry

1. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

In this scientific field, the author has 8 scientific publications, included in the reference for "Associate Professor" and two dissertations (**A1 and B3**).

The two dissertations of Associate Professor Petar Petrov, PhD, are related to the most common behavioral disorder in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry. The first of them includes the only epidemiological study so far in our country on the prevalence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder conducted in the Varna region. The second looked at the risks of developing late sequelae of untreated Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder over a 10-year follow-up of patients. The author emphasizes that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the most frequently diagnosed behavioral disorder in childhood and one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders in the pediatric population. A study was conducted on the persistence of symptoms of ADHD in adolescence and adulthood, as well as the manifestation of negative consequences (disturbances) associated with the disorder. It is emphasized that the lack of specific criteria for the diagnosis of ADHD in adulthood in DSM-5 and ICD-10 creates serious difficulties both in terms of diagnosis and in terms of the therapeutic approach to the disorder.

Summarizing all the obtained results confirms the scientific data that the symptoms of ADHD persist in the course of development and at least half of the patients diagnosed with the disorder in childhood continue to have symptoms in adulthood as the negative consequences associated with ADHD do not always depend on the persistence of symptoms and treatment during development. The author concludes that it is possible that the reported reduction in symptoms of hyperactivity and, to a lesser extent, attention deficit is largely related to the lack of specific criteria for diagnosing the disorder in adulthood.

2. Eating Disorders in Childhood and Adolescence

One Monograph and 5 scientific publications are presented in this scientific field (G7.1; G7.2; G8.2; G8.3; G8.4). The monograph is dedicated to a very significant medical and social problem, namely the most common eating disorders - anorexia and bulimia nervosa. The author introduces us to the problem known from ancient times and found scientific foundations through time to the present day. The pursuit of perfection in terms of appearance is widespread in modern society. This model is enforced through various information channels. The adolescent age is most affected. The author outlines some significant risk factors in the spirit of the bio-psycho-social model. Modern diagnostic criteria are presented with their advantages and disadvantages in a discussion aspect. The rich personal experience of the author allows him to present and compare the information with what is known in the literature, and he has proposed a therapeutic approach that has demonstrated good results over the years.

Publications in this area include reviews of:

Risk factors for the onset of eating disorders in adolescence (G8.4)

The author discusses that, in addition to known biological factors that are difficult to affect, a wide range of environmental factors are also involved, including perinatal complications, personality traits, family relationships, socio-cultural attitudes, etc. The use of information sources, (internet, social networks) can increase awareness regarding eating disorders and support help-seeking and possibly the provision of an appropriate therapeutic approach.

Eating Disorders and Non-suicidal Self-injury in Adolescence (G7.1).

It is pointed out that almost all the studies conducted are retrospective and cannot provide a clear picture of the pattern of association between eating disorders and non-suicidal self-injury.

Eating Disorders and Suicidal Behaviour (G8.3).

Anorexia nervosa, Bulimia nervosa, Binge eating disorder are serious mental disorders. They have significant psychiatric comorbidity and are associated with high rates of suicidality. The

severity of the eating disorder, presence of comorbidity, Alexithymia, disturbed family relationships and others are highlighted as universal risk factors.

Presented Clinical Cases (G7.2; G8.3)

Presented are Clinical cases of a 16-year-old girl with anorexia nervosa, and extremely low body mass index of 10.4 and the need for treatment in intensive care unit (G7.2) and Cardiovascular complications in anorexia nervosa - a clinical case with transient left ventricular hypertrophy and obstruction in camera output path (G8.3).

3. Multinational studies of specific childhood-adolescence problems in the general population

In this scientific field, 3 (G7.4; G7.5 and G7.6) are referenced from a total of 10 scientific publications (in English, in international journals) that are related to international projects in collaboration with the ICMH Study Group (<https://www.icmhsg.org/index.php/publications/>) and studies conducted to date in the field of Child Psychiatry in the general population involving 10 countries.

Publications in this field consider:

- The relationship between locus of control, exposure to cumulative traumatic events, and posttraumatic stress symptoms in adolescents (G7.4). According to the authors, the study further strengthens the limited evidence to date that external LOC partially mediates the relationship between cumulative trauma exposure and PTSD symptoms among adolescents.
- A study (G7. 5) on exposure to traumatic events in childhood noted that various psychiatric disorders arise and are maintained, but most commonly post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Were assessed the types of traumatic events experienced and the presence and predictors of PTSD symptoms among adolescents in the general population of ten low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). The findings may serve for generation of PTSD severity estimates, the allocation of health care resources, and the design and implementation of psychosocial interventions for PTSD in low- and middle-income countries.
- The relationship between locus of control, negative life events and the manifestation of psychopathological symptoms in adolescents (G7.6). The study examined the moderating and mediating effects of LoC on the relationship between negative events and psychopathological symptoms (anxiety and depression symptoms) in adolescents from collectivist countries (n=2800). The authors discusses that, consistent with previous research, negative life events and external LoC are associated with more psychopathological symptoms. In contrast to past studies with samples from individualistic countries, the current study did not provide clear evidence that LoC moderated or mediated this relationship. The results are discussed in terms of cultural differences in the (un)desirability of external control.

4. General presentation of features in the field of child psychiatry

Included for reference are scientific publications that address various significant aspects of child-adolescent psychiatry, such as:

- Anxious and depressive symptoms in childhood (including preschool age) and adolescence (G8.1)
- Non-suicidal self-injury: application of the ISAS and ABASI/ABUSI in a non-clinical adolescent population (G8.5) and First results of the application of the ISAS and ABASI/ABUSI in a study of non-suicidal self-injury among Varna schoolchildren (G8.6).

Included in the reference, beyond the minimum science requirements for holding Academic position "Professor", is a full-text multinational publication in an authoritative scientific journal, "The Lancet", based on a 12-week, randomized, double-blind, parallel-group, multicenter phase 3 trial in 46 specialized psychiatric branches or centers in Bulgaria, Finland,

Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Africa and Ukraine. The authors conclude that this first study in a pediatric population supports the efficacy of 25 mg/day agomelatine, in addition to psychosocial counseling, in the treatment of adolescents with major depressive disorder, without unexpected safety events. This drug may provide another option in the limited psychopharmaceutical repertoire for the treatment of major depressive disorder in this age group.

In his overall scientific work, Associate Professor Petar Petrov has publications and contributions in textbooks and in other areas in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry, such as:

- The relationship between alcohol and substance use and quality of life in adolescents
- The role of personal and family factors in adolescent alcohol and substance use
- Cross-cultural characteristics in the use of several screening tools in the general adolescent population

Outside the field of child and adolescent psychiatry, Prof. Petrov participated in a Bulgarian scientific team with a publication-review on the topic: Types of pain in COVID-19 and features of pathogenetic molecular mechanisms (G7.3). The aim is to describe the known mechanisms for the occurrence and persistence of pain in patients with COVID-19, to classify the pain phenomena and to present its most common localizations. In summary, the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 and associated pain should be carried out by a multidisciplinary team of specialists, given the heterogeneous clinical manifestation of the disease.

Conclusion

Assoc. Prof. Petar Milchev Petrov, MD, Ph.D, DSc is an ambitious, experienced clinician, researcher and educator. His indicators for scientific research, teaching and clinical activity 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.

In conclusion, everything presented so far gives me the reason to give a positive opinion and to suggest to the honorable members of the Scientific Jury to vote positively for awarding the academic position "**Professor** in the specialty "**Child Psychiatry**" to **Assoc.Prof. Petar Milchev Petrov, MD, Ph.D, DSc**, in the field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.1. Medicine for the needs of the Department of "Psychiatry and Medical Psychology", Faculty of Medicine - Medical University Varna and the Fourth Clinic "Child and Adolescent Psychiatry" at the "St. Marina" University Hospital - Varna.

24 Jul 2023r.
Varna

Signature:

/Prof. Dr. Mariana Arnaudova, MD, PhD/

