

OPINION

from

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**Appointed as member of academic jury with Order № P-109-
174/23.04.2021 of the Rector of Medical University - Varna**

Subject: Competition for academic rank “Associate Professor” in higher education field 7. Health Care and Sport; professional field 7.4. Public Health, specialty Public Health Management to Medical College – Varna, Rehabilitation Medicine training sector, announced in State Gazette 17/26.02.2021.

The only applicant approved for participation in the announced competition for academic rank “**Associate Professor**” in scientific specialty **Public Health Management**, is Chief Assistant Professor Silviya Ivanova Filkova, PhD – head of the **Rehabilitation Medicine specialty training sector** at the Medical College – Varna.

I. Applicant’s career profile

Silviya Filkova was born on 9 June 1969 in Varna. In 1992 she graduated from the Medical College – Sofia in the “Physical therapist” specialty. During the period 1992-2011 she worked as physical therapist in the University Pediatric Hospital in Bankya, Auto transport clinic – Sofia, Health centre “Pulse” – Varna etc. In 2000, she graduated as Master in Health Management from the Medical University – Varna, and in 2016 – as Master in Rehabilitation, Thalassotherapy, Wellness and SPA from the Medical University – Varna.

The teaching activities of the applicant at the Medical College began in 2012 to present. In 2018, she was appointed as Chief Assistant Professor, and in 2020 – as head of the Rehabilitation Medicine specialty training sector. In 2017 Filkova was conferred the PhD educational and academic degree in the scientific specialty Public health management after defending a thesis entitled “Prevention of spinal deformities in preschool children“.

So far, the applicant Chief Assistant Professor Silviya Filkova has completed one specialisation programme at the Medical University, Varna – Recreation, SPA and Wellness Management in 2011 and another programme in Yoga Fly – Basics of Sports Training in 2014.

As an instructor at the Medical College – Varna, Silviya Filkova has actively participated in the development of curricula and programmes for the Professional Bachelor educational and qualification degree of the Physical therapist specialty at the Medical College – Varna.

She is member of the College Council at the Medical College – Varna, member of Quality Committee at the Medical College – Varna, head of the Programme Council of the “ Rehabilitation, Thalassotherapy, Wellness and SPA” specialty to the Public Health Faculty – Varna.

II. General description of materials presented in the competition

The presented materials in the competition for conferral of the Associate Professor academic rank in Public Health Management specialty, higher education field 7. Health Care and Sport; professional field 7.4. Public Health; comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Statute for its application and the Statute for Development of Academic Staff at the Medical University – Varna.

III. Evaluation of research works of the applicant with regard to overall academic development

1. General characteristics of scientific works and publication activity

The overall publication activity of the applicant comprises **31** research works. Out of them, **14** are included in the fact sheet about fulfillment of minimum national requirements (MNR) for the academic rank “Associate Professor” according to the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria from 2018. Another **3** publications are presented out of the body of evidence regarding MNR fulfillment for the rank.

- Dissertation - 1
- Monograph - 1
- Full-text articles - 29 (5 associated to the PhD dissertation; 9 – presented in the Chief Assistant Professor competition; 15 - presented in the Associate Professor competition), among which:
 - 4 articles in journals refereed and indexed in world databases of scientific information;
 - 25 articles in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals.

2. Scientific activity – distribution and application of research & development achievements of the applicant(s) among the academic community

The scientific activity and the main scientific contributions of Silviya Filkova are focused on the following research fields: *Health promotion; Prevention of spinal deformities and low-back pain; Innovative approaches to recreation and rehabilitation.*

The presented fact sheet shows that original research contributions covered a broad range of scientific subjects on important problems in the public health and health care fields, which are entirely within the specialty of the announced competition.

- **Promotion of health (Г_7-1; Г_7-3; Г_8-4; Г_8-7; Г_8-8; out-2)**

Research works in this field reflect author's interest to investigation of awareness of people of different age groups about factors influencing healthy lifestyle. The maintenance of recommended age-dependent healthy levels of physical activity and decrease in time spent in sedentary behaviour are indispensable elements of healthy lifestyle.

A detailed analysis on methods for evaluation of physical activity in children was performed. As a result, the necessity for uniform methods of assessment with regard to application in research on physical activity was outlined.

- **Prevention of spinal deformities and low-back pain**
(A_1; B_3; Γ_8-1; Γ_8-3; Γ_8-5; Γ_8-6)

The research aimed at prevention, early diagnostics and restriction of juvenile and adolescent spinal deformities is presented with a dissertation thesis, a monograph and four articles. The subject is important as it is focused on the period of active growth and development in children.

On the basis of systematic review of literature and own practical experience, the author has described and summarised both practically approved and innovative methods for evaluation and diagnostics of functional and structural spinal deformities.

- **Innovative approaches to recreation and rehabilitation**
(Γ_7-2; Γ_8-2; Γ_8-9; out-1, out -3)

The presented reports on problems of recreation and rehabilitation evidence the interest to investigation of innovation in recreational and rehab approaches aimed at improvement and perfection of methods of prevention and rehabilitation as well as opportunities for their application and popularisation.

The attitudes for implementation of innovative sport activities in students with aggressive behaviour were investigated. The effect of the Yoga Fly system as anti-stress approach which balances the nervous excitability and inhibition processes was shown to reduce the risk from aggression episodes.

Outlined contributions are important for the teaching activities and practical work of Chief Assistant Professor Filkova. Personal research works provide proofs about her interest in theoretical, methodical and pedagogical fields of rehabilitation, public health and medico-social activities.

Participation in performance and management of projects. Chief Assistant Professor Silviya Filkova has participated in two research and development projects at the National Sports Academy in 2019 entitled: “Systematic analysis of methodology of organisation, functional tests and prevention of improper posture in students 6-11 years of age” and a project funded by Fund “Scientific Research” for 2020-2023 entitled: “Ergonomic study of the working environment using innovative computer models with regard to prevention of musculoskeletal disorders”.

3. Original research achievements (scientific reputation)

A large part of publications of Silviya Filkova are in co-authorship and are aimed at improving tuition quality of students majoring in the Professional Bachelor degree “Rehabilitation Medicine” at the Medical College in Varna.

The research activities of Silviya Filkova is popularised among the Bulgarian and global scientific community through her participation in research works and reports at national and international congresses and conferences. The applicant has participated in 28 national and 2 international forums with oral presentations or posters.

IV. Evaluation of the monograph or equivalent publications, presented in the competition for Associate Professor rank

Silviya Filkova is the only author of the monograph „**Modern Lifestyle and Functional Spinal Deformities**“, published in 2021 (ISBN 978-619-7671-11-7). It is devoted to a very important medical and social problem – poor posture among children as a result of hypodynamia and excessive use of electronic devices. The main goal of the monograph was to investigate and analyse consequences of modern lifestyle on body posture and to recommend measures for prevention and prophylaxis. The monograph could be useful for all specialists working in the rehabilitation medicine field.

V. Impact (citations) of applicant’s publications in national and global scientific literature

Citations of research works of Silviya Filkova are 8: 1 in journal refereed and indexed in a world database, 2 – in non-refereed journals, and 5 – in monographs.

VI. Overall evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning activities

Silviya Filkova, applicant for the academic rank “Associate Professor” is head of the Programme Council and instructor in the Rehabilitation Medicine specialty at the Medical College – Varna. She is member of the Programme Council of the “Rehabilitation, Thalassotherapy, Wellness and SPA” specialty at the Public Health Faculty – Varna.

The in-class engagement of the applicant Chief Assistant Professor Filkova in the Rehabilitation Medicine specialty for **2015-2020** was **2331 academic hours**. She performs training in 3 courses. The average annual engagement is 466 hours.

VIII. General evaluation of applicant's compliance with the requirements and mandatory criteria and groups of parameters for conferral of academic ranks at the Medical University - Varna

The applicant in the competition for conferral of the academic rank Associate Professor Silviya Filkova *possesses the necessary professional and pedagogical competence* in the field of rehabilitation medicine and public health, demonstrated through teaching and research activities at the Medical College to the Medical University – Varna.

Original approaches and methods have been applied throughout her overall scientific production, and respective contributions were made. All they are prerequisites for optimisation and development of the educational system in Kinesiotherapy, Therapeutical massage and Clinical practice study courses and research fields.

The applicant has managed to employ her scientific production in *the training of students* from the Rehabilitation Medicine specialty, Medical College, Medical University - Varna.

IX. Conclusion


According to the Statute for Academic Staff Development at the Medical University – Varna, the presented scientific publication activities are compliant with minimum research metrics requirements to applicants for the **Associate Professor** academic rank in **higher education field 7. Health Care and Sport; professional field 7.4. Public Health.**

The research works presented by the applicant give proof about substantial theoretical and applied contributions. The research and development activities present outstanding achievements in both science and practice.

On the basis of detailed acquaintance with provided documents and my personal impressions from the applicant, I have performed an integral evaluation of the research, teaching & learning activities with regard to the competition for conferral of the academic rank “Associate Professor” of Public Health Management and I affirm that the applicant completely meets all requirements.

*On the basis of aforemade analysis, I am fully convinced in giving a positive evaluation and therefore recommend the honorable academic jury members to vote positively for conferral of the **academic rank “Associate Professor” of Public Health Management in higher education field 7. Health Care and Sport; professional field 7.4. Public Health, for the needs of Rehabilitation Medicine specialty training sector at the Medical College - Varna to Chief Assistant Professor Silviya Ivanova Filkova, PhD.***

10 June 2021
Stara Zagora

Undersigned:.....
/Assoc. Prof. Ruska Paskaleva, PhD/