

STATEMENT

by

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Regarding the participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7: "Health and Sport", professional field 7.1 "Medicine", specialty "Social Medicine and Health Management", for the needs of the Mental Health Department, Mental Health and Addiction Prevention Directorate, NCPHA, announced in Official Gazette No. 90 of 11.11.2022.

One candidate participated in the competition – Assistant Professor Vladimir Venkov Nakov, MD, PhD.

Biographical and professional data

Dr. Vladimir Nakov, MD was born on April 18, 1973. In 1997 he graduated as Master of Medicine, at the Medical University, Pleven. In 2002, he obtained a specialty in Psychiatry - Medical University, Pleven, and in 2015 - an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Medicine, specialty "Social Medicine and Organization of Health Care and Pharmacy" at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses, Sofia.

In the period 1998-2000, Dr. Nakov worked as a district doctor in the Municipal Hospital - Levski, and later as a psychiatrist in the day hospital at the University Hospital "Dr. Georgi Strensky", Pleven. In 2004, he was appointed as a consultant psychiatrist at the Pleven Prison "Kaylaka". In the period 2005-2006, he worked as a psychiatrist-resident in a consultative emergency ward at the City Dispensary for the Treatment of Mental Diseases - Sofia, and since 2007 until now - as a senior assistant at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses, Directorate for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Department of Mental Health. Until 2018, Dr. Nakov was a visiting assistant professor at the Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Department of Public Health and Sport, and since 2016 until now - at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Department of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy. He is a scholarship holder of the Center for Academic Research - Sofia 2020.

Dr. Nakov is a member of: the Board of the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association; the Supervisory Board of the BPA; the BMA; the Section of Suicidology of the European Psychiatric Association; the Mental Health Association for South East Europe.

The candidate has participated as a coordinator and lead contractor in 8 national and

international projects and programs, as well as in the development of the National Program for Suicide Prevention in Bulgaria 2013-2018 and the National Strategy for Mental Health 2020-2030.

He has completed a three-year qualifying course in mental health at the University of California - Berkeley. He has had a large number of interviews in the daily press and electronic media related to mental health.

General description of the competition submissions

The materials and documents submitted by Dr. Nakov for the competition fully comply with the requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor, as set out in the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Holding of Academic Positions at the NCPHA. They characterize the candidate's long-standing work and professional experience and enable the analysis and review of the scientific and publication activity, as well as the scientific and creative achievements.

Evaluation of the candidate's scientific works for overall academic development

Dr. Nakov's scientific output and publication activity is mainly in the field of psychiatry and public health issues. The candidate has submitted a total of 28 publications, out of which: 3 monographs in which he is an author and co-author; 1 abstract; 17 publications in Bulgarian and 7 in foreign journals and collections. Eight of the journals have IF 4. 971. The scientific activity includes 26 participations in scientific forums, mainly abroad, and two scientific meetings in Bulgaria. He participates regularly in the annual conferences of the College of Private Psychiatry and the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association. 143 citations are listed, according to a check in the available databases (Scopus and Web of Science, as well as other databases) with a total of 2145 points.

The presented reference of the scientific contributions of the works covers the period from 1998 to 2022 and includes areas of scientific, applied, clinical-diagnostic and clinical-therapeutic nature. The included works are in Bulgarian and English and represent mainly scientific articles in prestigious journals, contributions to monographs and reports, scientific communications, etc.

The scientific contributions of the publications are divided into five areas:

- Organization of health care and in particular of psychiatric care, legislation, patients' rights and stigma regarding patients with mental illness;
- Clinical-therapeutic and clinical-diagnostic research;

- Epidemiological studies in suicidology and mental illness;
- History of medicine and psychiatry;
- Public Health, Crises, Covid-19 Pandemic.

Organisation of health care, in particular psychiatric care, legislation, patients' rights and stigma regarding patients with mental illness

There are five publications in this area (18, 19, 28, 66, 70). They deal with extremely important issues concerning the rights of patients with mental illnesses, the organisation of the activities of institutions for long-term accommodation of persons with these illnesses, dementia and other problems. The topic of stigma is one of the main ones.

Clinical-therapeutic and clinical-diagnostic research

Publications, presentations and participation in scientific meetings in this area are seven (4, 5, 6, 11, 25, 65, 68) and cover a wide spectrum of mental illnesses and diagnostic problems. Over the years, the focus of interest has shifted from the particular to the general and is directed primarily at general practitioners.

Epidemiological studies in suicidology and mental illness

Publications in this area are the most numerous - fourteen (1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 26, 72). Scientific contributions in the field of mental health have a high degree of scientific representativeness and international relevance. Most of them have been published in prestigious scientific journals.

Dr. Nakov builds on his dissertation work with a book on suicides in Bulgaria for a five-year period - "Suicides in Bulgaria 2009-2013", as well as with a monograph that mainly examines the historical context of suicides and presents data for a 10-year period - "Suicides in Bulgaria. Historical context. Current data". It should be noted that the applicant has personally contributed to the collection and synthesis of the information, as he is responsible for the web-based suicide portal.

Epidemiological studies of common psychiatric disorders (depression, generalized anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder) are an essential part of Dr. Nakov's research. Two large epidemiological studies have been conducted and analyzed. The data collected allows for an assessment of the etiology of psychiatric disorders, environmental factors, traumatic life events, and impairments in social functioning, as well as the need for psychiatric care and psychiatric services.

History of medicine and psychiatry

This section includes four publications (22, 23, 69, 73). Historical data on the development of psychiatry traces the formation of the psychiatric network, personnel, activities, etc. Particular attention is paid to the lack of state involvement in the functioning of psychiatric services. These studies have been presented at several national and international forums - in Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova and Romania.

Public health, crises, the Covid-19 pandemic

This section includes eight publications (16, 21, 24, 27, 67, 71, 74, 75). The scientific contributions in this area are related to the training of employees of public organizations on mental health issues in the registration and reception centers for asylum seekers and special homes for temporary accommodation of foreigners in Bulgaria. Issues concerning the use of certain substances both for entertainment and for treatment (dinitrogen oxide, "medical marijuana", methadone hydrochloride, etc.) are also addressed.

For the first time in Bulgaria, the question of the legal regulation of marijuana and the possibility of using it not only as a recreational drug, but also as a substance that enhances the quality of life, as well as for medicinal purposes has been raised. Topics related to dinitrogen oxide have been analyzed, and a model for a low-threshold methadone maintenance treatment programme has been developed, mainly aimed at reducing harm from substance use. The evidence-based health policy report analyses the actions of the Ministry of Health in various areas, providing reasoned proposals for change in the way the health department makes decisions. Issues of suicide prevention and the influence of media are analyzed.

A scientific contribution is the analysis of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of the Bulgarian population, which consists in a new vision that explains the newly emerging disturbing mental phenomena, and proposes the development of adequate measures to deal with them.

Overall assessment of the applicant's compliance with the mandatory conditions, quantitative and scientometric indicators according to the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Holding of Academic Positions at NCPHA

The publications presented by Dr. Nakov show his excellent training in the field of public health, including mental health, the ability to thoroughly analyze scientific data,

independent development and application of scientific and applied methods and programs.

The career development of the candidate and the submitted documents, scientific publications and materials, give me reason to believe that he is an established professional, prepared and competent scientist in the field of public health and psychiatry. Dr. Nakov's scientific activity complies with all the mandatory conditions and requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor", set out in the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Holding of Academic Positions at NCPHA, as well as in the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the submitted documents on the scientific research and publication activity of Dr. Vladimir Nakov gives me full grounds to claim that the career development of the candidate meets the mandatory and specific conditions and scientometric indicators for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Health Management", in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sport", professional field 7.1. "Medicine".

I vote "FOR" the awarding of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in "Social Medicine and Health Management" to Dr. Vladimir Nakov, MD, PhD, in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sport", professional field 7.1 "Medicine", for the needs of the Mental Health Department, Mental Health and Addiction Prevention Directorate at NCPHA.

08.02.2023

Assoc. Prof. Galya Tsoleva, MD, PhD

