

Review

RE: competition for holding of academic position of “professor” in 7.1. Medicine and 7.4. Public Health at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, as announced in the State Gazette, issue 88 of 08 Nov 2011, with sole candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyubomir Dimitrov Spasov, MD, PhD

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Massimo Malago, Professor of Medicine, London Clinic Liver Center, NHS University Hospital, London, Great Britain, member of the Academic Jury, pursuant to Order No. ПД 19-645 dd. 14 Nov 2011, issued by the Rector of SU St. Kliment Ohridski

The sole candidate, who submitted documents for, and was admitted to, participation in the competition, is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyubomir Dimitrov Spasov, MD, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of SU St. Kliment Ohridski.

This review has been prepared after comprehensive familiarization with the materials presented in relation to the competition, and also in compliance with the requirements of the legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria in relation to development of the lecturers and holding of academic positions in higher medical schools.

Associate Professor Dr. Lyubomir Dimitrov Spasov has worked as a physician since 1989, after obtaining his Diploma in Medicine from the Faculty of Medicine of the Medical Academy, Sofia.

Dr. Spasov has acquired 2 specialties – a specialty in General Surgery (1998) and a specialty in Cardiac Surgery (2000).

He also holds a master’s degree in Health Management and has acquired the Master of Economy professional qualification (2004).

In 2008, he was awarded the Doctor of Medicine academic degree.

In 2009, he received the Associate Professor academic rank.

Dr. Spasov is fluent in 4 languages – English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

As a cardiac surgeon, Assoc. Prof. Spasov’s length of service amounts to a total of 22 years. In 1990, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Spasov commenced his employment with the then newly-opened cardiosurgery department of Lozenets Hospital, and from 1998 to date, based on the competitive principle, he has been the University Hospital Director.

As of 2009, Assoc. Prof. Spasov has been appointed in the position of Associate Professor, and has been combining his lecturing activities at the Faculty of Medicine of SU St. Kliment Ohridski with his therapeutic-diagnostic and surgical functions at the Cardiac Surgery Clinic with Lozenets University Hospital.

Assoc. Prof. Spasov’s professional qualification is rich and diverse, and he has gained invaluable relevant experience in partnership with some of the leading surgeons at university hospitals in the European Union countries. His academic growth has been significantly enhanced through his broad-ranging international contacts, which he has been establishing in the course of his

specializations and professional qualifications in the field of organ transplantology (hepatic, cardiac, and renal transplantations) in England, France, Germany, the USA, Slovenia, Italy, etc.

I have been able to form my own personal impressions of Assoc. Prof. Spasov and his work in the field of surgery, cardiac surgery, and transplantation during the long years of work and contact with him and his Institution. Assoc. Prof. Spasov's attributes such as his erudition, sound medical scholarship and competence, his consistency, elevated professional and ethical standards, his exceptional skills and leadership in the field of health management enable him to maintain his positions and to responsibly seek the best academic and managerial solutions, even more so under intricate conditions. Thanks to his expertise, skills, and innovative pursuits, the Lozenez Hospital has become established as a leading national medical institution, with an excellently trained interdisciplinary team, obtaining an excellent accreditation assessment by the Ministry of Health, and earning its University Hospital status as a training and clinical facility for the Faculty of Medicine with SU St. Kliment Ohridski.

Assoc. Prof. Spasov's qualities and skills have been judged on their merit, as evidenced by his many national and international honorary distinctions and awards. In 2005, Assoc. Prof. Spasov was awarded the "Physician of the Year" title and was pronounced an honorary citizen of Sofia. In 2006, he was decorated with the Order of the Star of Italian Solidarity, while in 2007 he received the "Worthy Bulgarians" award.

The number of scientific papers presented for the professorship competition totals 116. The number of published scientific papers is 90, and that of reported scientific papers is 26. Out of the total number of published papers (scientific articles, textbooks, monographs, and an author's abstract), 10 articles have been published in foreign journals, and 75 have been published in Bulgarian journals. Assoc. Prof. Spasov is the author of 26 research papers reported at scientific forums, of which 9 have been presented abroad, and 17 have been presented at national congresses with international participation. He has had one monograph issued independently, and has coauthored another two monographs, and a textbook.

Assoc. Prof. Spasov has participated as a co-executor in 3 successfully completed research projects.

The scientific papers presented for review pertain to the Medicine and Public Health professional directions.

In the Medicine professional direction, the most significant input from research is related to the issues of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, and more specifically, in the field of cardiac surgery, transplantology, and transplantation psychology.

Assoc. Prof. Spasov's professional achievements in his surgical practice inspire respect. He is a pioneer in creating the best transplantation practice in Bulgaria.

Some of the most significant results from Assoc. Prof. Spasov's operative and research work are as follows:

- Bulgaria's first successfully performed beating-heart surgery – aortocoronary bypass;
- Bulgaria's first video-assisted mitral valve repair and replacement through a 10-cm chest aperture;
- Bulgaria's first transmyocardial laser revascularization;
- Bulgaria's first liver transplantation.

In the field of liver transplantology, the following significant results have been successfully realized and described for the first time:

- The first liver transplantation in Bulgaria.
- The first living donor liver transplantation in Bulgaria;
- The first liver transplantation in a pediatric patient in Bulgaria;
- The first successful deceased donor liver transplantation in Bulgaria;
- The first *split-liver* transplantation in Bulgaria;
- The first fully implantable artificial heart surgery in Bulgaria.

The results from the coronary revascularizations in “beating heart” conditions are deemed to be of a contributive nature. An analysis of the dynamics of aortocoronary bypasses at Lozenets University Hospital has been carried out. Another original contributive input is considered to be the data from an aortocoronary bypass performed without extracorporeal blood circulation – principles of performance, advantages, and early results. Priority data have been obtained for minimized coronary operations – indications, techniques, contraindications.

The introduced method of transmyocardial laser revascularization (TLR) is considered contributive, too. The data on surgical treatment of terminal-stage cardiovascular insufficiency have priority. The assessment criteria for the clinical status of patients awaiting organ transplantation have been presented for the first time. A telemedical project for follow-up of the condition of patients with cardiovascular diseases has been described for the first time.

New data have been presented on the current issues in transplantation medicine in Bulgaria. The publications discussed in groups in relation to the original results from liver and heart transplantations successfully performed for the first time in Bulgaria have priority.

The publications in the field of transplantation psychology reflect the latest trends in the modern medical and psychological science. They constitute practical guidelines for consulting and counseling patients expecting organ transplantation and patients who have had organs transplanted. The above thematic scope is extremely relevant and still underdeveloped both in the medical and in the psychological theory and practice.

Within the integrated European context, the international cooperation aimed at dealing with the modern-day challenges and complex issues in the healthcare system has acquired key significance. In his monograph titled “Economic and Ethical Aspects of Transplantology in Bulgaria”, Assoc. Prof. Dr.

Spasov presents the latest theoretical endeavors and extensive practically oriented material on the problems involved in organ transplantation, and provides guidelines for establishing an overall strategic framework for a nationally responsible policy and practice in the field of transplantology.

In the Public Health professional direction, on the basis of critical analyses of international and personally conducted empirical studies, an analysis and assessment has been carried out of the economic and social weight of chronic conditions, and summarizations have been set forth, such summarizations being of a methodological and theoretical importance to public health, and enabling the attainment of better standards in healthcare activities. Problems have been identified in relation to timeliness and the patients' access to medical attendance, and an emphasis has been placed on the need for new therapeutic approaches, and particularly on the need for integration and coordination of extra-hospital and intra-hospital aid, thus placing the patient at the center of integrated health activities.

The economic problems have been studied from a many-sided perspective in the context of health assurance medicine, taking account of the need for new normative and organizational technologies intended to improve the patients' access to quality, qualified, and highly specialized medical assistance.

In conclusion, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyubomir Spasov possesses distinguishable clinical and research capabilities and scholarly expertise, and demonstrates an innovative and proactive attitude to his activities as a lecturer and teacher. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyubomir Spasov has vision in the future, incontestable integrity, clear understanding and balanced judgment of complex situations, distinctive leadership capacity to transform projects in facts. There is both continuity and consistency in Assoc. Prof. Spasov's ascending the hierarchy of academic positions.

Given his indisputable scientific achievements, and based on my high appreciation for his overall activity, I unreservedly maintain that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyubomir Spasov meets all normative requirements, and hereby propose with conviction and without reservation that he should be elected for the academic position of "Professor" in 7.1. Medicine and 7.4. Public Health at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

January 12th, 2012.

Signature:



Prof. Dr. Massimo Malago',

(Royal Free Hampstead University Hospital, London, UK)

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