

REVIEW

On: Competition for occupation of academic position "Associate Professor" in the area of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sport, professional field 7.1. Medicine, scientific specialty "Ocular diseases", announced by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", in State Gazette, number 59/26.07.2019.

by Prof. Tsvetanka Tsankova Marinova, MD, PhD, DSc, member of the Scientific Jury and lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Information on the competition procedure

The regulatory requirements for the competition procedure have been met. The competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" in the professional field 7.1 Medicine (Ocular diseases - one) is announced for the needs of the Department "Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology" in the Medical Faculty of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The competition announcement was published in State Gazette, number 59/26.07.2019. The composition of the Scientific Jury was determined by Order of the Rector No. RD 38-634 of 31.10.2019 on the grounds of decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine (Protocol No.72/30.09.2019). One candidate participates in the competition: Elena Atanasova Mermeklieva - Haralanova, MD, PhD. The review was prepared in accordance with the Law on Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Rules for the Implementation of the LDASRB and Section IV (Terms and Conditions for Occupation of the Academic Position "Associate Professor") of the Rules for the Conditions and Procedure for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The applicant's documents are in full compliance with the regulative requirements for admission and participation in competition for the occupation of academic position "Associate Professor" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

They are presented in sequence from No. 1 to No. 44 and include supporting evidence: Curriculum Vitae; Higher education diploma; Diploma for educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Ophthalmology; Diploma for specialty in Ocular Diseases; Certificate for work experience in the specialty; Official note from University Hospital "Lozenets" for concluded labour agreement; Documents proving the fulfilment of the requirements under art.105, para 1, item 2; Medical certificate; Criminal record certificate; List of publications, inventions and other applied research results: a) list of all publications, b) list of publications submitted for participation in the competition; Reference according to the form for meeting the national minimum requirements for the relevant scientific area and the additional requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with evidence; Reference of citations by Central Medical Library – MU Sofia; Reference of citations by NACID; Reference to original scientific contributions; Reference to the indicators under art. 112, para 2; Scientific papers submitted for participation in the competition; Abstracts of the peer-reviewed publications in Bulgarian and English languages; Copy of the announcement in the State Gazette; Declaration under art.115, para 1, item 5; Two types of official notes for IF by Central Medical Library – MU Sofia and by NACID; Document certifying registration with the National Register of Academic Staff at NACID and Annexes; PhD Dissertation (with Summary of PhD thesis); Monograph work; Practice guidelines; Publications in ISI IF journals referenced in worldwide databases Scopus, Web of Science; Publications in international peer-reviewed journals; Publications in national peer-reviewed medical journals; Participation in international scientific forums; Participation in national scientific forums; Attachments concerning the teaching activities; Applicant's references as a peer-reviewer in refereed journals with ISI IF and member of editorial boards of medical journals; Membership of scientific societies and organizations; Awards and distinctions; Information about clinical and surgical activity of the Hospital "Alexandrovska", Sofia; International grants won; Certificates for specialization abroad; Certificates of completion of specialized courses in ophthalmology and aesthetic medicine; Certificates of completed health management course and others.

Applicant's curriculum vitae and academic development

Dr. Elena Atanasova Mermeklieva - Haralanova was born in 1973 in Kazanlak. She has higher education in Medicine (Diploma C-MUS, No. 002988, Reg. No. 1967 of December 10, 1997). She completed her secondary and higher education with excellent grades. In 2002 she acquired a specialty in Ocular Diseases (Diploma C-AC No. 008651, Reg. No. 007455 of November 25, 2002). She was awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Ophthalmology in 2018 (Diploma No. 649-D of October 16, 2018, C-MUS No. 000705). She has a professional qualification in health management, completing a full course of three modules: Fundamentals of Health management; Health management of pre-hospital and hospital medical care; Healthcare resource management.

Dr. Mermeklieva has worked consistently as an ophthalmologist at St. Sofia Medical Center and Diagnostic consultative Center-XX-Sofia from 12.2002 until 08.2012. Since 2007 she has been working as an ophthalmologist at the Alexandrovka Hospital, Sofia, Clinic of Ophthalmology, Department of Vitreoretinal Surgery and Ocular Injuries. Since 2009 she has been working as an ophthalmologist at MC "OFTA-NEVRO" and since 2019 as an ophthalmologist at UH "Lozenets".

Dr. Mermeklieva specializes abroad and in the country. There are seven specializations abroad (England, Slovenia, Austria, India, Czech Republic, Germany and the USA): 1. Specialization in Moorfields Eye Hospital – London, England – oculoplastics, cornea, cataracts, vitreoretinal surgery; 2. Specialization in New York Eye & Ear Infirmary, New York, USA – plastic and reconstructive eyelid surgery, orbit surgery and lacrimal system; 3. Specialization in University Eye Clinic, Ljubljana, Slovenia - laser therapy, electrophysiology, neuroophthalmology; "Salzburg Weill Cornell Seminar in ophthalmology" – Salzburg, Austria; 5. Phaco Fellowship, Training in Cataract Surgery by Phacoemulsification – Mahatma Eye Bank & Eye Hospital – Nagpur, India; 6. 4-th LOEG Age related macular degeneration course – Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic; 7. Roland Consult Hands-On-Course in Electrophysiology and Imaging, Berlin, Germany. Evidence materials (39 certificates in total) of the applicant's professional specializations are presented. Documents are

attached for completed specialized courses in ophthalmology - 31 and specialized courses as well as certificates in aesthetic medicine - 6.

Dr. Mermeklieva is a member of nine scientific associations and organizations, including: Bulgarian Medical Association, Bulgarian Society of Ophthalmology, Bulgarian Glaucoma Association, and Bulgarian Association for Clinical Electromyography and Evoked Potentials. She is holder of distinctions and awards: three national awards and five international grants awarded with the respective certificates (1. SOE Educational grant – 2007; 2. IFOS/ICO International Fellowship – 2008; 3. EBO grant for teachers – 2008; 4. AAF/OMI grant – 2012; 5. LIONS Club International Grant – 2013). Dr. Elena Mermeklieva is a mother of three children.

Scientific research and scientometric data

The applicant's scientometric data, evaluated in their wholeness, are in full compliance with the criteria and indicators recommended in the regulations for evaluation by the Scientific Jury at conducting a competition for “Associate Professor”. The scientific papers submitted for review are from the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine, scientific specialty “Ocular diseases”. They are mainly in the following fields of specialty: electrophysiology, ophthalmoneurology, retinal diseases, inflammatory, traumatic and tumour diseases of the eyes.

The distribution of Dr. Elena Mermeklieva's work in scientific fields is as follows: Electrophysiology: papers - 31, reports - 10, posters - 7; Inflammatory diseases: reports – 2, posters – 1; Retinal diseases: papers – 1, reports - 1; Tumour diseases: papers - 1, reports – 1; Injuries to the eye: reports - 2; Ophthalmic neurological diseases: papers – 9, reports – 1, posters – 1. The analysis of publications and participation in scientific forums does not include those related to the dissertation for educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Ophthalmology.

Dr. Mermeklieva is the author and co-author of a total of 68 scientific papers with indisputable scientific and fundamental contributory character. The number of published scientific papers is 42 and the number of scientific papers reported - 26. The applicant is the sole author of one monograph and one practice guidelines.

The list of publications submitted for participation in the competition includes: PhD Dissertation work for the obtaining the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Ophthalmology: “Changes in the indicators of the electrophysiological examination of visual analyser in patients with diabetes mellitus“, Sofia, 2018, 205 pages; Monograph: “Vision electrophysiology - basic principles and clinical application”; sole author Dr. Elena Mermeklieva, 2018, East-West Publishing House, 141 pages, ISBN: 978-619-01-0265; Practice Guidelines: "Electrophysiological Methods in Ophthalmic and Ophthalmic-Neurological Practice", a practical guide for ophthalmologists, neurologists and physiologists; sole author Dr. Elena Mermeklieva, 2018, East-West Publishing House, 61 pages, ISBN: 978-619-01-0366-0.

The actual publications are 42 (3 of them are related to the dissertation, 1 of which is in the ISI IF journal); 39 are not related to dissertation work, with 6 of them being internationally referenced in international databases Scopus, Web of Science of journals with ISI IF – first; sole author, 2 in international journals with SJR refereed in worldwide databases Scopus, Web of Science – first author; 4 in Bulgarian journals refereed in the worldwide databases Scopus, Web of Science – first author; 1 in international peer-reviewed journals – third author; 26 in national peer-reviewed medical journals – first author in 13 of them.

In actual publications, the distribution of Dr. Mermeklieva's author participation is as follows: first author - 28 (67%); second author - 2 (5%); third and next author - 12 (28%). In published summaries, whose number is 26 (2 of them before the PhD Dissertation for educational and scientific degree “Doctor”) the distribution is as follows: first author - 8 (31%); second author - 3 (12%); third and next author - 15 (57%).

Participations in scientific forums: 3 participations in scientific forums abroad (excluding those in the PhD Dissertation for educational and scientific degree “Doctor”) in 2 of them the first author; 23 participations in national scientific forums (2 related to the PhD Dissertation for educational and scientific degree “Doctor”) in 6 of them the first author. The distribution of the evidence material is as follows: Participations in international scientific forums excluding the dissertation – 3; Participations in national scientific forums excluding the PhD Dissertation – 21;

Participations in research projects - two: 1. Matveev M., Mermeklieva E. "InterCriteria Analysis - A New Approach to Decision Making". A research project funded by the Bulgarian National Scientific Fund 2016-2017, DFNI-I-02-5; 2 Haralanov L., Matveev M., Mermeklieva E. "A model for the analysis of auditory brainstem-evoked potentials in patients with acute disorders of the cerebral circulation", funded by MU-Sofia in 1996-1997, Collection - analyses and results, Sofia, January, 1998, 20-21.

According to the information provided by CML, MU-Sofia - 4 citations are found in the Scopus database, in Web of Knowledge – 4 citations, and 4 citations are found in Bulgarian sources. According to the NACID reference on citations – 6 citations are found in the databases Scopus, Web of Science and other databases. The journals' IF where there are citations is 0,453, SJR – 0,267. According to the references presented by CML, MU-Sofia and NACID on the IF value related to the publications of Dr. Elena Mermeklieva (excluding those related to the PhD Dissertation), the overall ISI IF is 5.943, and the personal ISI IF is 5.940.

The most significant contributions from the scientific work of Dr. Mermeklieva are detailed in the enclosed documents of the competition "Author's reference to the contribution nature of scientific works". They are the result of studies in the basic scientific fields listed above, and are very well substantiated and accurately reasoned with evidence. They relate mainly to the following more significant stages of the applicant's scientific development:

Dr. Mermeklieva's dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" is dedicated to a topical and extremely important problem in the field of ophthalmology – impairment to the visual analyser as a complication of diabetes mellitus, the role and importance of some electrophysiological methods for the early preclinical detection of impaired visual analyser function. Original results are obtained and three scientific-theoretical contributions, four scientific-applied contributions and two confirmatory contributions are formulated.

Dr. Mermeklieva's monograph is the only edition in Bulgarian language that describes the nature, emergence and development of the knowledges for the vision electrophysiology. Different types of electrophysiological methods and their application in various ophthalmic and ophthalmoneurological diseases are discussed in

detail. New, original data of the author and her own clinical experience are presented in the analysis of interesting clinical cases.

Dr. Mermeklieva's Practice Guidelines is a book that discusses in detail new possibilities for the application of particular electrophysiological methods, with recommendations for their implementation and level of awareness in the diagnosis of various diseases. A successful attempt has been made to present the complex matter of electrophysiology in an accessible form to a greater number of specialists - ophthalmologists, neurologists and physiologists.

In general, Dr. Mermeklieva's publications (for the most part - 31) are devoted to electrophysiological methods for research in various diseases. The original scientific findings obtained from interesting clinical cases have indisputable fundamental, methodological and applied contributory character. Some of the contributions of the results obtained by Dr. Elena Mermeklieva (published and reported) are related to the introduction in Bulgaria of a number of new and classic electrophysiological methods. Other scientific contributions concern the creation of original methods and techniques for electroretinography in ophthalmic, ophthalmoneurological and certain systemic diseases, as well as the development of benchmarks from these studies for the Bulgarian population.

Dr. Mermeklieva is registered in the Register for Scientific Activity at the NACID. The comparative analysis made of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b from LDASRB for the scientific field 7. Healthcare and sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine with the attached reference to the real points of Dr. Mermeklieva shows, that Dr. Elena Mermeklieva meets the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor. The detailed analysis of the relevant groups of indicators A, B, C, G, D, E of Dr. Mermeklieva proves the following: Indicators A and C meet the national requirements, indicator G is 1087, 38 at a minimum requirement of 200. Indicator D is 160 with a minimum required value of 50. Applicant's indicator E is 105, with minimum national requirements for E (0) [they are the same for indicator B (0)].

The total number of points of Dr. Mermeklieva is 1502.38 with the minimum number as a national requirement for the academic position of "Associate Professor" being 400. By group of indicators – G, D, E, Dr. Mermeklieva's values exceed the national minimum requirements.

Teaching and lecturing activities

Dr. Mermeklieva has significant experience in teaching "Ocular diseases" to students for education qualification degree Master, specialty Medicine, and for education qualification degree Bachelor. She has trained students at the Medical University of Varna, Veliko Tarnovo Branch for 4 academic years and doctors-specialists in eye diseases at the Medical University - Sofia, Department of Ophthalmology (basic course, first and second part) for 4 academic years.

Clinical activity, applied science and other professional activities

Dr. Mermeklieva is a highly qualified ophthalmologist with proven significant clinical experience in various aspects: conservative treatment of all types of ophthalmic and ophthalmic neurological diseases, surgical treatment of eyelids and conjunctiva, cataracts, glaucoma, laser treatment for retinal rupture, diabetic retinopathy, YAG-laser and SLT-therapies, intravitreal drug applications, electrophysiology, fluorescein angiography (FA), optical coherence tomography (OCT), ultrasonic scanning and so on. She has participated in seven clinical trials.

Official note is attached from the Hospital "Alexandrovska", Sofia for the performed surgical interventions in 2017.

Dr. Mermeklieva is a member of the editorial boards of medical journals (international and national), referee of papers in specialised medical journals, of the abstracts of the 2016 World Ophthalmology Congress, and of papers in peer-reviewed international journals with ISI IF (6 certificates are attached).

Conclusion

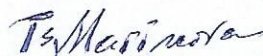
Dr. Elena Mermeklieva – Haralanova participating in the competition for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor”, is a highly qualified and well-informed specialist, creative and established researcher with significant scientific work and original contributions in the field of ophthalmology. She exhibits consistency, persistence and precision in all aspects of her scientific, creative, clinical and expert work. She is the holder of awards and certificates from international and national organizations and scientific forums. Her research work is very intense and effective. Dr. Mermeklieva's scientometric data are not only in compliance with, but also exceed the national minimum requirements, the regulative criteria and indicators for the evaluation of the candidates in conducting a competition for the academic position "Associate Professor".

Dr. Mermeklieva fully complies with the regulatory requirements of LDASRB and the Rules for the Conditions and Procedure for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The complex evaluation of her documents gives me a ground for a positive opinion. Therefore, with complete conviction, I propose to the honourable members of the Scientific Jury to decide on the election of Elena Atanasova Mermeklieva - Haralanova, MD, PhD for “Associate Professor” on: 7.1 Medicine (Ocular diseases) and occupation of this academic position at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

December, 6th 2019

A member of the Scientific Jury and a reviewer:.....



(Prof. Ts. Marinova, MD, PhD, DSc)