

OPINION

in connection with a competition for an associate professor in a professional direction 7.1. Medicine (Hygiene),
announced in SG No. 61 dated 02.08.2022
by Professor Dr. Varban Stoyanov Ganev, PhD, DSc

One candidate participated in this competition - Dr. Rositsa Bozhidarova Popova, PhD, Chief Assistant Professor of Hygiene and Ecology at the Faculty of Medicine, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Brief introduction of the candidate

Dr. Rositsa Bozhidarova Popova is a master of medicine, she graduated in the specialty "Medicine" in 2002. She successfully defended a dissertation on the topic "Malnutrition - modern diagnostic and therapeutic approaches", with which she was awarded a doctorate in 2014. Has a specialty in Nutrition and Dietetics from 2012. She participated in various qualification courses at home and abroad, such as: European course for leadership positions in nutrition (ENLP) (28.03.–05.04.2012 - Luxembourg), LLL-course for nutritional support in the perioperative period (1.10. -3.10.2010, Sunny Beach), Advanced Course in Clinical Nutrition (19.04-25.04.2009 - Maastricht, Netherlands), Second TTT Course (Teach the Teachers) of the European Society for Enteral, Parenteral Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN), Course for Teacher Training Within the Framework of an International LLL-course (18.01.2009 - Nice, France), Fifteenth Basic Course in Clinical Nutrition (ESPEN) (06.11-12.11.2008, Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic), ESPEN LLL-course (12.09.–16.09.2008 - Florence, Italy), LLL-course of ESPEN (05.06.–07.06.2008 - Sofia), Fourth Course of the Adriatic Club in Clinical Nutrition (11.04.–13.04.2008 - Fr. Brioni, R. Croatia), Thematic course Current problems in diet therapy (31.03.–04.04.2008 - Sofia), Thematic course Modern metabolic diseases – diagnosis, treatment and prevention (18.02.–22.02.2008 - Sofia). Dr. Rositsa Popova's professional development includes working as a general practitioner at the "Dr. Organdzhiyski" Polyclinic, Shtip, Republic of Macedonia (01.08.2003–02.24.2007), Physician at the Belgian Diet Center Diet Centers Group, Sofia (26.02.2007-28.09.2010), Medical representative at "AXON Bulgaria" OOD - MILUPA, Sofia (05.11.2010–21.02.2012), Nutritionist at "Fit&Full" OOD, Sofia (05.03.2012-04.02.2013), Assistant, Physician-teacher of hygiene and ecology (04.02.2013–01.10.2018) and Chief assistant, Physician-teacher of hygiene and ecology at the Faculty of Medicine, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (from 01.10.2018 until now).

From the short introduction of the candidate, it can be seen that Dr. Rositsa Bozhidarova Popova, PhD, has educational and scientific degrees, professional qualifications and teaching experience in the field of hygiene and ecology, which fully meets the requirements for the academic position of associate professor of hygiene.

Research work of the candidate

Dr. Rositsa Bozhidarova Popova, PhD, works in the field of preventive medicine, and her research work can be grouped into several areas. (1) Detailed study of patients with chronic malnutrition. (2) Study of different

dietary regimes with the ultimate goal of developing recommendations for healthy eating and prevention of some socially significant diseases. (3) Investigation of lipid status in malnourished patients and creation of approaches for its correction. (4) Study of different protective-prophylactic dietary regimes in some professions. (5) Development of proposals for medical and nutritional regimens for certain diseases. (6) Characterization of main aspects of eating disorders: (a) nutrition and nutritional status in patients with anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and other eating disorders; (b) monitoring dietary regimes in patients with behavioral disorders; (c) depression in patients with eating disorders and its influence on the evolution of the disease. (7) Stress factors in a student sample and their influence on lifestyle and nutrition.

Dr. Rositsa Bozhidarova Popova, PhD, has summarized 13 contributions, which she defines as scientific-fundamental, scientific-applied and methodical. I accept the reference made about the contributions, considering that some of them should be highlighted. Dr. Rositsa Popova suggests the calculated area of the arm muscles as an additional indicator to the anthropometric methods for body composition when assessing the nutritional status of patients with chronic malnutrition. This metric correlates with muscle strength and is suggested as a good predictor for monitoring nutritional support. Also in relation to muscle strength, the determination of the degree of ventricular dysfunction by tissue doppler echocardiography is proposed. The significance of the MMSE (Mini Mental State Examination) test for quick, easy and reliable determination of cognitive functions in determining the nutritional status of patients with chronic malnutrition is characterized. Based on her own results, Dr. Rositsa Popova draws a conclusion about the importance of early diagnosis of eating disorders and the application of optimized individualized diet therapy in patients with chronic malnutrition of different etiology, and for the latter she makes important recommendations. The collected results of monitoring biomarkers for nutritional status have provided a basis for formulating essential recommendations in the monitoring of nutritional disorders occurring against the background of accompanying diseases (metabolic syndrome, autoimmune and neurological diseases, overweight), as well as in various types of monotonous long-term employment (office work, students' study activities).

Materials and evidence in connection with the sample reference for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of ZRASRB for scientific field 7. Health-protection and sport, professional direction 7.1. Medicine - Hygiene.

In the submitted materials for this competition, Dr. Rositsa Bozhidarova Popova, PhD, duly presents materials and evidence in connection with the sample reference for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the relevant scientific field and the additional requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The total number of points on the presented indicators of Dr. Rositsa Popova is 577,5, which exceeds the requirements for position of associate professor (docent) in a professional direction 7.1.

The following materials are presented by indicators:

Indicator 1. Dissertation work for the award of the Educational and Science Degree "Doctor" - in the presented documents an abstract is attached and the main contributions and results of Dr. Popova's development on the topic "Malnutrition - modern diagnostic and therapeutic approaches" are presented in a concise form.

Indicator 3. Habilitation work - monograph - a full volume of own monograph entitled "Malnutrition and depression in eating disorders" is presented with an abstract, full bibliography and review.

Indicator 7. Publications and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information. Copies of five scientific articles published in the Journal of International Medical Association Bulgaria (IMAB) are presented (two articles), and one article each in Acta Microbiologica Bulgarica, Archives of the Balkan Medical Union and Bulgarian Public Health Magazine. In two of the articles Dr. Rositsa Popova is the first author, in two others she is the last author and in one paper she is in second place.

Indicator 8. Publications and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes. Nine articles are presented, two of which are in journals and seven are in collective volumes.

Indicator 10. Citations or reviews in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information or monographs and collective volumes. One article by Dr. Rositsa Popova was cited in one publication.

Indicator 11. Citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes. Five publications with the participation of Dr. Rositsa Popova have been cited in monographs and collective volumes.

Indicator 12. Citations or reviews in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals. Four publications with the participation of Dr. Rositsa Popova, included in the materials of this competition, are cited.

Indicator 15. Acquired medical specialty. A copy of the Nutrition and Dietetics certificate is submitted.

Indicator 17. Participation in an international scientific or educational project. A copy of the certificates proving the participation of Dr. Rositsa Popova in the international Nutrition Day Project in 2017 is presented.

Indicator 22. Training of interns, specialists and doctoral students (seminars and practical classes). A report on the study load of Dr. Rositsa Popova for the last five years, issued by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for participation in seminars for trainee doctors in Bulgarian and English.

Academic and teaching work of the candidate

Dr. Rositsa Bozhidarova Popova, PhD, has a solid experience as a teacher of hygiene and ecology at the Faculty of Medicine, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

She has gone through the stages of development as a non-qualified teacher - assistant and principal assistant.

The report presented shows a huge study load of Dr. Rositsa Popova, which for the period 2017-2021 amounts to 4253.6 hours, and this study load includes teaching hygiene and ecology to medical students and trainee doctors (in Bulgarian and in English), as well as to students of the "Nursing" specialty.

Dr. Rositsa Popova participated as an examiner of candidate student works in biology in the last few years. Participates in published study guides in Bulgarian and in English, as well as textbooks on hygiene and nutrition for students of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, for general practitioners and for specialists in hygiene and nutrition. Actively develops promotion activities of the problems of healthy eating and healthy lifestyle with participation in a national daily newspaper, as well as in forums for training the population and general practitioners. She is the author of dietary recommendations for cardiovascular diseases intended for patients, general practitioners and cardiology specialists.

In general, it can be confidently said that Dr. Rositsa Bozhidarova Popova, PhD, is among the leading teachers of hygiene and nutrition in our country, an established specialist in the professional world, with authority in front of students and specialized doctors, as well as in front of the large audience to the general public.

In conclusion, I am completely convinced that Dr. Rositsa Bozhidarova Popova, PhD, is a built specialist, persistent fruitful researcher and solid teacher in the field of hygiene and nutrition. She fully meets the requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in Hygiene and Nutrition at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

I will strongly vote "YES" for this position.

November 09, 2022

Reviewer:

