**STATEMENT**

**From Prof. Sonya Koleva Toncheva, MD, PhD**

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Member of the Academic Advancement Board, appointed by Order No.

109-177 / 03.06.2020 of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna

S**ubject: Procedure for holding the academic position of Associate Professor** in 7. Health-care and sport – higher education area, 7.4. Public Health – professional field; Public Health Management specialty, opened for Medical College – Varna, Rehabilitation Training Sector, at the Medical University of Varna.

**I. Information about the procedure**

The current competition for filling the academic position of Associate Professor has been published in the State Gazette, No. 8 on January 28th, 2020. **Nikolay Svetoslavov Nedev, PhD, Assist. Prof.** at the Rehabilitation Training Sector, Medical College – Varna at the Medical University of Varna, is the only candidate for filling the academic position. I have been appointed as a Member of the Academic Advancement Board, pursuant to Order No. – 109-177/03.06.2020. of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna, and under Protocol №1 of the first meeting of the Academic Board, to make a position statement on the procedure for holding the academic position of Associate Professor.

The applicant has submitted all relevant documents in accordance with the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA) and the ones specified in the Rules and Regulations of MU-Varna for the academic staff development.

**II. Brief career profile of the applicant**

**Assist. Prof. Nikolay Svetoslavov Nedev, PhD,** has a Bachelor's degree in Kinesiotherapy acquired at Angel Kanchev University of Ruse. In 2005, he started his professional career as a kinesiotherapist at the First City Hospital in Ruse, where he worked at the Department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation until 2006. In the period of 2005 to 2007, he acquired his Master’s degree in Health Management at MU-Varna, performing at the same time (from 2006 to 2008) as a manager of a Beauty Centre in Varna. In the following 2009, after a successful competition, Nikolay Nedev was appointed an Assist. Prof. at the Rehabilitation Training Sector, Medical College – Varna. From 2013 to 2015 he was elected to serve as a Head of the Rehabilitation Training Sector. Currently, he is a Deputy Director of the Medical College – Varna. Nikolay Nedev continued his education throughout his career successively acquiring a Master's degree in Rehabilitation, Sea Treatment, Wellness and SPA at MU-Varna (2014/2016), a Master's degree in Kinesiotherapy at the National Sports Academy – Sofia (2017/2018), and a PhD in Public Health Management (2016/2018). He is involved in the practical training of students majoring in Rehabilitator conducting training exercises, seminars and clinical practice. N. Nedev actively engages his students in research projects, the results of which are presented jointly at science forums and conferences.

Assist. Prof. N. Nedev is a member of the Bulgarian Association of Physiotherapists and the Bulgarian Scientific Society for Public Health.

Assist. Prof. N. Nedev is an industrious and diligent participant in the groundwork and management of the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth science forums of the Medical College – MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” Varna, held annually from 2016 to 2019, respectively.

The applicant seeks to expand his theoretical and practical knowledge by undertaking different post-graduate trainings which help him expand his research and tutoring skills. Assist. Prof. N. Nedev has taken part in the following courses: "Ayurveda", "Oncological Rehabilitation", "Introduction to Applied Kinesiology", "Kinesiotaping (upper quadrants)", and "Manual Therapy". No CCST acquired yet. The applicant speaks English (level B 2).

**III. Evaluation of the research, academic and administrative achievements of Nikolay Svetoslavov Nedev, PhD**

* **Overview of the academic and applied research of the applicant**

The applicant has submitted his research and publication record (19 research papers, including a PhD thesis) as relevant documentation thus specified in the competition procedure of Medical University of Varna for filling the academic position of Associate Professor (State Gazette, No. 8 on January 28th, 2020). The table presents **applicant’s research papers referenced as meeting the minimum requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor in accordance with the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (2018) – 14 pcs, and research publications exceeding the minimum requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor – 4 pcs.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicators** | **Single-authored papers** | **1st author**  | **2nd author** | **3rd and next author** | Total |
| **Indicators included in a reference template for meeting the minimum requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor in accordance with the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (2018).** |
| Monographs |  1 |  |  |  | **1**  |
| Full-text publications in research journals referenced and indexed in *WOS/Scopus* | Bulgarian research journals |  |   |  | 1 | **1**  |
| Full-text publications in peer-reviewed journals not referenced in the top list of the world's academic research databases | International research journals |  |  1 | 1  |   | **2**  |
| Bulgarian research journals |  4 |  2 |   | 4  | **10**  |
| **Total** |  **14** |
| **Research publications** **exceeding the minimum requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor** |
| Full-text publications in peer-reviewed journals not referenced in the top list of the world's academic research databases | Bulgarian research journals  | 1 | 2  |    | 1  |  **4**  |
| **Total** |  **4** |

The papers listed in the author's research and publication record are mainly in Bulgarian publications. N. Nedev is a single author in 33% of the presented papers; he is the first author in 28% of **the total number of the published works**; the second author in 6% of the publications, and third or consecutive author in 33% of the works. They present the author's ability to write independently and in a team demonstrating his proficiency to work in a team.

**The academic contribution of applicant’s publications in the national and international research literature** is presented in a bibliographic and scientometrics summary provided by the Research Library of MU-Varna: 10 citations are revealed present-day. The report does not provide data on Impact Factor. A confirmation reference that Assist. Prof. Nikolai Svetoslavov Nedev, PhD, has an active Google Scholar account has been presented.

Assist. Prof. Nedev’s research area is illustrated in the submitted for review scholarly works and can be summarised in the following main areas:

* **Main research areas of academic papers:**

**1. Post-stroke rehabilitation services;**

**2. Scope and potentials of pulmonary rehabilitation in public health;**

**3. Healthcare rehabilitation in chronic conditions;**

**4. Innovative methods of teaching and electronic forms of education of students at the Medical College – Varna.**

* **Contributions identified with the main areas of scholarly works:**

**RESEARCH AREA 1: Importance of rehabilitation in the recovery of stroke patients**

Author's research in this area focuses on the methods and means of physiotherapy (kinesiotherapy) for patients who have experienced a stroke (stroke-survivors). The possibilities for conducting rehabilitation of stroke patients and the quality of rehabilitation services have been studied. Patients' opinions on the duration and rehabilitation environment were investigated. The necessity of a content-rich and timely program has been put forward. A systematic analysis and evaluation of the quality of life and the degree of motor ability of stroke patients certified for concomitant decreases of performance and who had undergone rehabilitation were presented. Based on the results obtained, a comparative analysis of one’s own results to those of similar studies was performed. A model for in-home therapy and rehabilitation has been developed within this frame of reference.

**A/1\_1; D/8\_4; D/8\_5; II/A\_1; II/A\_2; II/A\_3; II/A\_4 present conceptual, methodological and applied contributions.**

**RESEARCH AREA 2:** **Scope and potentials of pulmonary rehabilitation in public health**

Author's research in this area focuses on restoring the functional activity of patients undergoing rehabilitation using physiotherapy techniques, in addition to their primary treatment. The essential role of rehabilitation for improving the quality of life through motor training is outlined. N. Nedev’s doctoral thesis is a contribution to this area of research. It studies the effects of respiratory physiotherapy and indicates the importance of early physiotherapy after stroke in order to provide timely opportunities for patient’s rapid recovery and reduce the risk of complications and disability. The results of various clinical trials in pulmonary and cardiac diseases/conditions for which respiratory physiotherapy is appropriate have been summarised.

**The scholarly papers numbered B/3\_1; D/8\_9; D/8\_11; D/8\_12 present conceptual and applied contributions.**

**RESEARCH AREA 3: Healthcare rehabilitation in chronic conditions**

The groundwork reflected in the scholarly papers referring to Research area 3 stand out with value-added conceptual and applied contributions to the physical and rehabilitation medicine. Assist. Prof. N. Nedev discusses subject matters such as: management of lumbar pain; suction therapy in cervical osteochondrosis; kinesiotherapy in a patient with musculoskeletal dysfunction (Scheuermann-Mau's disease); the adverse effects of chronic kidney disease (CKD) on musculoskeletal health and physiotherapy options to improve the quality of life; concepts and socio-medical aspects of coping with chronic pain, and the place of physiotherapy in providing complex rehabilitation services. Papers numbered **D/8\_3; D/8\_6; D/8\_7; D/8\_8; D/8\_10** demonstrate author’s innovative methods in providing rehabilitation services based on personal therapeutic experience with patients in chronic pain. His conceptual and applied contributions have been confirmed.

**RESEARCH AREA 4: Innovative methods of teaching and electronic forms of education of students at the Medical College – Varna.**

Assist. Prof. Nedev explores the impact of various teaching methods on student competence, proving that interactive learning strategies significantly improve results. His innovative methods and approaches provide the basic requirements for effective training in a creative novel perspective: systematicity to generate knowledge; skills and habits to apply logical flow and address tasks; consistency in the performance and strict methodology for building particular skills and knowledge; accessibility reflected in the compatibility of content and teaching methods.

The practical contribution of interactive learning is expressed in enhanced knowledge and skills in the use of various types of tools of integrated marketing communications (IMC): advertising, public relations (PR), personal sales, sales promotion, etc.

**Conceptual and applied contributions are documented in research papers numbered D/7\_1; D/8\_1; D/8\_2.**

**N. Nedev’s teaching activity** spans over 11 years. He conducts clinical practice, lectures and exercises in the Rehabilitation specialty of Medical College – Varna. For the last five years, his teaching workload accounts between 453 and 215 hours, which exceeds the benchmark for an Assistant Professor and the executive administrative position he holds at MU-Varna (360 – 180 hours). Assist. Prof. Nedev lectures and conducts exercises in five disciplines of the curriculum of Rehabilitation specialty: Manual muscle testing, Kinesiotherapy, Healing massage, Kinesiology, Pathokinesiology.

The applicant has worked on various projects, including projects involving students. Assist. Prof. Nedev is an academic mentor to 30 students in the projects “Students practice” – Phase I and Phase II of the Ministry of Education and Science. He is actively involved in students’ scholarly sessions as a consultant and research supervisor.

**My recommendation** to the applicant is to intensify his publication activity by publishing the results of his research in specialised scholarly journals at home and abroad, in order to become available to a broader range of public health and rehabilitation specialists.

I consider it necessary to share my **personal impressions** on the applicant. I have known Assist. Prof. N. Nedev for more than ten years, since the time when he started as an Assistant Professor in the Rehabilitation specialty at Medical College – Varna. I have been familiar with the choice of topic for his doctoral thesis, his research efforts and his PhD procedure. His openness of character and candour, his curiosity and consistency in actions, establish him as a respected lecturer and colleague. He is an excellent team player with outstanding communication and management decision-making skills. As a Deputy Director of the Medical College – Varna, Nikolay Nedev was able to work with a wide range of university professors, to demonstrate his management skills in administering the educational process and his exceptional tolerance. I highly appreciate his remarkable energy for work, his amplitude and scientific rigour for research. His students respect him; his kindness gains the attention and trust of the practitioners he works with.

**Conclusion:** Presented publications show a sufficient volume and genre diversity which attests the applicant **Assist. Prof. N. Nedev** as an established lecturer in the field of rehabilitation care. Applied contributions have been summarised and evolved to techniques for the specific application at an organisational, regional and national level. The applicant demonstrates a wide range of interests in the disciplines he teaches. International experience in the field challenges applicant's pursuit to analyse and search for original solutions (models) for the application of healthcare innovations consistent with the national context. Assist. Prof. N. Nedev deliberates on the application of good practices in the field of rehabilitation and kinesiotherapy in search of approaches improving the care of stroke recovery patients, patients with COPD, as well as innovative training methods for future rehabilitators.

**Considering the undoubtedly high level of professionalism of the applicant, I put forth to the Academic Board my recommendation to propose to the Rector of Medical University – Varna the candidacy of Assist. Prof. Nikolay Svetoslavov Nedev, PhD, for the academic position of Associate Professor** in 7. Health-care and sport – higher education area, 7.4. Public Health – professional field; Public Health Management specialty, opened for Medical College – Varna, Rehabilitation Training Sector, at the MU-Varna.

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**Date: 28.07.2020 A Statement by: Prof. Sonya Toncheva, PhD**.