

To:

The Chair of the Scientific Jury,

Chosen by Ordinance № P-109-178/03.06.2020

By the Rector of Medical University of Varna "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov"

STATEMENT

By Assoc. Prof. Diana Todorova Gancheva-Tomova, MD, PhD
Department of Physiology and Pathophysiology,
Clinic of Hepatogastroenterology,
Medical University of Varna "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov"

About: A competition announced in State Gazette, issue 8/28.01.2020, for the academic position **Associate Professor** in the scientific field of **Hygiene (incl. labor, communal, school, radiation, etc.) (BLE)**, professional sphere 7.1. Medicine, in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sport – one (0.5 staff position), with a candidate for the position – **Lili Slavcheva Grudeva, MD, PhD**; for the needs of the Faculty of Public Health, Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, and general hospital positions in the General Administration of St. Marina University Hospital, Varna, additional condition: acquired specialty in Nutrition and Dietetics.

By an ordinance № P-109-178 from 03.06. 2020 of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna and a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University of Varna, and protocol № 149/19.03.2020 from the Scientific Jury (SJ) meeting, I was chosen to prepare a statement for the announced competition. The statement was prepared in compliance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for the Conditions and Order of Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Academic Positions in MU-Varna.

1. Short Biographical Information and Career Path

Dr. Lili Slavcheva Trifonova graduated from the High School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Targovishte in 1981. In 1987, she graduated from the Medical University of Varna with a major in Medicine. In the period 1987–1990, she was an intern at the Third Internal Department at the Municipal Hospital of Targovishte, and from 1990 to 1992 – a clinical intern in Internal Diseases at the Presidium of the Medical Academy, Higher Medical Institute – Varna. In the same period, she was doing her PhD in internal diseases at the Department of Internal Diseases. Since November, 1992 until now, after winning a competition, she has been working as a dietician at St. Marina University Hospital, Varna. In 1996, she acquired a specialty in Internal Diseases, in 2004 – Health Management (at the University of Economics – Varna), and in 2006 - a specialty in Nutrition and Dietetics. She was enrolled as a self-training PhD student in 2017. In 2018, she acquired a PhD degree in Gastroenterology with a dissertation titled – Optimization of the Clinical Approach and Diet Therapy in Gluten Enteropathy.

Dr. Lili Trifonova is an expert on nutrition, has prepared a number of statements, and conducted courses and lectures on nutrition and treatment of obesity.

2. Scientific Work and Related Contribution

The total number of scientific works with which the author is participating in the competition is 34, including a monograph and a book based on a defended dissertation. Out of them 31 participate as proof in the reference for the covering of the minimum requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor according to LDASRB (2018). Three publications outside the required proof material are presented.

The scientific interests occupying a central position in the published works of Dr. Lili Trifonova are in the field of gluten enteropathy.

The qualification work of Dr. Lili Trifonova, the monograph - Gluten-Related Disorders and Gluten-Free Diet. Modern Indications, is the first handbook in our country, which encompasses all aspects of the gluten-related disorders. It examines the problems of epidemiology, the newest immunological markers in the diagnostics, and the role of the histomorphological testing. The link between gluten enteropathy and other immune-mediated diseases is analyzed. An extensive study of the content of many foods and products used in everyday life is conducted. Special attention is paid to gluten-related disorders in childhood. For the first time, a new member of the group of gluten-related disorders is examined – namely gluten sensitivity (intolerance).

The book based on a dissertation - Gluten Enteropathy. Scientific Facts and Real Proof, presents in detail the newest scientific facts related to the pathogenesis of gluten enteropathy – one of the most widely spread intestinal autoimmune diseases. The role of the gut microbiota in the pathogenesis of the disease and the homeostasis is presented in detail. The book includes also the extraintestinal forms of the disorder. Attention is paid to the practical approach in cases with clinical suspicion with the purpose of timely diagnosis. The data reported in the book are supported by the long-standing clinical experience of Dr. Trifonova-Grudeva. The contribution of this work is indisputable:

- For the first time in Bulgaria, a thorough characterization of adult patients with gluten enteropathy is done.
- For the first time, a complex approach for early diagnosis is suggested as well as strategies for a screening of patients in outpatient care.
- For the first time, questionnaires for a survey of the nutritional status of the patients are developed.
- An assessment of the factors influencing the quality of life is performed.
- A diet strategy for monitoring, teaching and training of patients with gluten enteropathy is developed.

Interesting are also Dr. Trifonova's publications on pregnancy and gluten enteropathy, liver impairment associated with the disease, the social burden, and quality of life of these patients.

Part of the scientific publications of Dr. Lili Trifonova are dedicated to the oxidative stress in a specific professional group – scuba divers, and the diet recommendations in order to increase the antioxidant defense. With scientific and practical focus are the prepared study materials and recommendations for diet regimens in different disorders, including oncological and chronic kidney diseases. The publications on digestive enzymes are valuable, as well as the consumption of palm oil and the problem of the importance of enteral feeding and functional foods. Of importance are the developed diet recommendations for prevention of overweight and obesity in adolescents on the territory of the municipality of Varna.

Dr. Lili Trifonova has registered scientific profiles in Google Scholar and ORCID.

The attached academic reference including the following databases - Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar, shows that there are 6 citations in non-indexed journals with peer review.

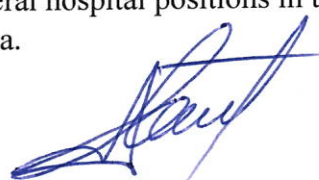
3. Teaching Activities

The presented reference from MU-Varna shows that Dr. Lili Trifonova started teaching in 2015, and until 2017, she was a part time teaching assistant the Department of Propedeutics of Internal Disease. In 2017 she became a full-time teaching assistant at the Second Department of Internal Diseases, ES of Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, teaching practical classes in gastroenterology to fifth-year medical students. She is a lecturer (lecture and practice course) in the disciplines – Bromatology and Medical Nutrition, teaching students in the programs Assistant Pharmacist, Nurse, and Midwife at the Medical College of Varna, the Veliko Tarnovo affiliate, Sliven affiliate, and Shumen affiliate. Dr. Lili Trifonova has a teaching load of 220 classes annually, complying with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff at Varna Medical University for participation in the competition.

4. Conclusion

Dr. Lili Trifonova is an established clinician, lecturer, and a specialist dietician with a long-standing rich experience and a significant contribution to the establishment of nutrition as a clinical discipline. She is the first physician with a specialty in Nutrition and Dietetics in Varna. Assessing the scientific work and the related contributions, teaching and clinical experience of Dr. Lili Trifonova, I believe that she covers completely the quality and quantity sciencemetric criteria for the academic position Associate Professor required by LDASRB, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for the Conditions and Order of Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Academic Positions in MU-Varna. I express my **positive statement** on the awarding of the academic position Associate Professor to Dr. Lili Trifonova in the scientific field of Hygiene (incl. labor, communal, school, radiation, etc.) for the needs of the Faculty of Public Health, Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, and the general hospital positions in the General Administration of St. Marina University Hospital, Varna.

Varna
12.7.2020


Assoc. Prof. Diana Gancheva-Tomova, MD, PhD