

## REVIEW

by

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Faculty of Pharmacy at Sofia Medical University,

member of the scientific panel, assigned by Order № ПД-109-170/22.4.2021 of the Rector  
of the Medical University “Professor Paraskev Stoyanov, MD” - Varna

Professor Dr Valentin Ignatov, MD

of a competition for the academic position “PROFESSOR” in the field of higher education

7. „Healthcare and Sport”, to professional field 7.1. “Medicine”, subject

„Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapy (Drug policy)“,

for the needs of the Department of Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmacotherapy, Faculty of  
Pharmacy to Medical University “Professor Paraskev Stoyanov, MD”, city of Varna, published  
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The commission for admission of documents approved one candidate for participation in the competition for the academic position “PROFESSOR” on the subject “Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapy (Drug policy)” – Associate Professor Albena Todorova Zlatareva, MD, PhD. The set of documents provided by Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva for the competition is arranged in accordance with the requirements, no documents are missing, and the evidence provided is correct, comprehensive and in accordance with the requirements of the regulatory documents, related to development of the academic panel.

This review has been prepared in accordance with the Law on Development of the Academic Panel in Bulgaria (LDAPB), the Implementing regulation of the Law on Development of the Academic Panel (RALAP) and the Regulation for Development of the Academic Panel of MU – Varna, version 2020 (RDAPMU-Varna).

I am a co-author with the candidate of an online textbook, issued by MU – Varna in 2018.

### **Professional development of the candidate**

Assoc. Prof. Albena Todorova Zlatareva, MD, PhD graduated with a Master's degree in Medicine in 1992 from the Higher Medical Institute "I. P. Pavlov", town of Plovdiv with very good grades in semester and state exams. Since 01.01.1998 she has acquired a specialty for postgraduate training in "Anesthesiology and Resuscitation", and in 2014 she successfully defended a dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "PhD" in the subject "Pharmacology (including Pharmacokinetics and Chemotherapy)" in the Medical University - Sofia, on the topic: "Financing of rare diseases pharmacotherapy".

Since May 2016 until now Dr. Zlatareva holds the academic position of “Associate Professor” on the subject of “Clinical Pharmacology and Therapy” in MU – Varna.

Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva has an ascending professional development and a rich career, which gradually goes through clinical medical practice, the pharmaceutical industry, government and municipal administration, NHIF, manager and head of medical and health

institutions, part-time and full-time lecturer at universities. It is necessary to emphasize the wide scientific and applied activity of the candidate in the field of the national medicinal policy and medicinal regulation in Bulgaria and the fact that she is consistently engaged, as: deputy associate at the National Assembly's Permanent Healthcare Committee in the period 2005-2009; Deputy Director for Medicinal Policy and Control of the National Health Insurance Fund during the period 2009-2010; member of the Commission for the Positive Drug List and member of the Accreditation Council at the Ministry of Health for 2009-2010; Chairperson and member of work groups on the amendment of the regulatory framework in the medicinal sector within the period 2009-2010; Adviser to the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Program in 2012 in the field of medicinal policy and application of good practices to improve access to diagnosis and treatment in the affected communities.

The candidate also has more than 10 years' experience in different medical universities in the field of Anaesthesiology and Resuscitation, Pharmacotherapy, medicinal policy and Pharmacoeconomics. She holds the academic position of Assistant from 01.4.1993 to 30.11.1995 in the Medical University – Plovdiv. During the period 2014-2016 she is a part-time lecturer to the Faculty of Public Health to MU – Varna, and as of today she holds the academic position “Associate Professor” in the university. She also takes part in teaching in Master's program in Public Health and Health Management, part-time form of education, with Russian language teaching; she is a scientific supervisor of 3 successfully defended doctoral students and 2 graduates, member of scientific juries, incl. for award of academic positions. She speaks English and Russian.

Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva is a reviewer in different international scientific journals, such as Balkan Medical Journal; International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review and Value in Health. In relation to the specifics of the subject of the competition, it should be noted Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva's active participation, cooperation and lead of local and international organizations, projects and programs in the field of public health and medicinal policies, such as ARPharM, CEIBG, American Chamber of Commerce, National Cancer Plan, Project: Western Balkans: Health Coalition; Patient Engagement and Patient power; School for patients; Economist Intelligent Unit - Breathing in new Era: a comparative analysis of lung cancer policies across Europe; Bulgaria country Lung cancer profile; MSD for Mothers; Organon – communication and changes; Listen, Learn, Lead: a project, aiming at the better team work and designing policies for better local environment in the field of oncology and vaccines; Lung cancer treatment rate – an international project, aiming at improving the treatment of patients with oncological diseases; National project: Making the population aware of the National Vaccination Policy; Project for implementation of the National Cancer Plan; Take a breath – dedicated to lung cancer; COVID – 19 Alliance and many other.

### **Academic and teaching activities.**

The candidate covers the requirements and has the necessary teaching experience – more than 7 (seven) years in total of consecutive holding of academic positions, such as assistant, part-time lecturer and Associate Professor. She takes part in teaching the disciplines “Anaesthesiology and Resuscitation” and “Comparative Analysis of Healthcare Systems” in

Russian language. Since 2016 to date, she has been lecturing courses on Medicinal Policy, seminars and practical classes for students, PhD students, post-graduate students in the field of medicinal policy such as: Pharmaceutical business and market access to medicines (for post-graduate training); Market access to medicines - current tendencies and others.

The research and teaching work of Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva with students, graduates, postgraduates and doctoral students is also confirmed by the provided academic transcripts, official notes, certificates, diplomas, directions for thematic courses and realized scientific publications. In addition to lectures and exercises the academic workload meets the requirements and includes practical seminars, qualification courses, continuing education, foreign language training.

She has three successfully defended PhD students (Dr. Milko Kovachev, Dr. Spartak Milev, Dr. Branimir Brankov), whose scientific advisor of studies is Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva and this is clear evidence of her good methodical work with doctoral students and active cooperation with students and post-graduate students.

### Scientific and research activities.

Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva takes part in the competition with a total of 58 works, as follows: 2 monographs (one presented as a postdoctoral work on subject: Fundamentals and tendencies of the medicinal policy in the European Union (corresponds to the requirements of the LDAPB and RDAPMUV) – a total of 216 pages; 1 book (bilingual), 54 publications in specialized science journals, of which 16 in international journals, referred to Scopus or Web of Science (1 with impact factor) and 38 in Bulgarian journals and one textbook for post-graduate training in electronic form.

In 58% of the presented scientific publications the candidate is the first or the only author, and the production significantly exceeds the minimum requirements of RDAPMUV for the professional direction. The presented calculations are correct and their summary in group criteria is stated in the table.

Index group	Professor	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Albena Zlatareva, MD, PhD
A	50	50
B	-	N/A
C	100	100
D	200	550, incl. 230 (main list) + 320 (additional list)
E	100	230
F	100	341

The scientific works presented for review are not used for award of the educational and scientific degree “PhD” and for holding the academic position “Associate Professor”.

Assessment of the monograph works and scientific publications provided for participation in the competition requires an in-depth analysis, and it should be noted that the

main fields of scientific interests correspond to the scientific specialty of the competition and the qualification, competence, experience and teaching activities of the candidate.

The main monograph work is titled *Fundamentals and tendencies in the drug policy in the European Union* and concerns different aspects of the medicinal policy and regulation, focusing on its specific characteristics for the Bulgarian healthcare system. The monograph work is of major scientific and practical importance and is a contribution to the scientific field.

I'd like to note the main fields of scientific and research interests of the candidate Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva, since her contribution can be summarized in the following SEVEN directions:

### **1. Drug policy and drug regulation**

The direction is represented in all publications. Comparisons are made and the uniqueness of the processes for different countries is pointed out, as well as the good practices. There are 2 articles with a focus on the regional drug policy, and I highly appreciate the textbook on market access to drugs, published by MU-Varna, of which the candidate is the author and editor. In 3 articles and several participations in projects the main focus is on vaccines, vaccination policies and programs. A specific emphasis in the scientific production and project activities is put on the oncological drug policy.

I would like to note the due importance of patients and patient organizations as a partner in creating a working drug policy in 4 of the publications of Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva. Issues related to the process of positioning patients as an equal participant in the process of creating medicinal policy at the local level are covered and clarified.

2 specific publications on the right to health, incl. of vulnerable groups of patients, as well as during crisis situations are particularly relevant.

### **2. Digital training in the field of drug policy**

Three publications on the topic, published in international journals, are presented for review. The need for creation and development of digital forms of continuing education for medical specialists in the field of drug policy is substantiated, as the data from the conducted research show that medical specialists in Bulgaria and the countries of the Balkan region have the motivation and aspiration to upgrade their training in this field and they welcome the provision of such an opportunity.

### **3. Legal regulation of the drug sector**

The author has 12 scientific publications, where she has analysed the regulatory basis including in historical aspect, both in Bulgaria and in most European countries. The reflection of the regulatory acts on the drug sector, conducting drug policy, influence on patients and public is evaluated. I consider these publications as having theoretic and practical contribution, showing the advantages and disadvantages of the application of specific regulatory acts.

### **4. Good and innovative medicine practices**

A total of 8 publications, 6 of them are published in journals with scientific review and 2 in a Bulgarian journal, referred to and indexed in Scopus. Specific therapeutic needs are considered, as well as problems in the field of aesthetic surgery and analgesia in such type of therapies. Patients' desire for less invasive procedures with a shorter recovery period is becoming a constant impetus for innovation in cosmetic surgery. The penetration of tissue adhesives, which leads to promising better results in face-lifting, is of interest.

## **5. Pharmacoeconomic aspects of the drug therapy**

A large volume of publications – a total of 10, analyse the expenses for pharmacotherapy for many diseases, as the focus is on those, requiring most resources. Expenses made by the public health funds in our country and in other European countries are considered and analysed, conclusions are made, both theoretical and practical, for the rational management of the medicinal therapy expenses. The results have been published in Bulgarian and international scientific journals and the articles are co-authored with leading experts in the field in Bulgaria.

## **6. Drug use**

The results of a series of macro- and micro-level drug use studies for specific therapeutic classes and diagnoses are presented. The main directions are in the field of rare diseases and their pharmacotherapy, vaccine prophylaxis of oncological diseases, the impact of the introduction of new therapies in oncological therapy on the morbidity rate and use of medicines and specific diagnoses (cardiovascular, schizophrenia, rheumatoid arthritis, beta-thalassemia, psoriasis, ulcerative colitis, etc.) with a great impact not only on the individual patient but also on society.

## **7. Clinical trials**

Out of 2 publications, one is published in an impact factor journal and the motives, benefits and risks for all participants in clinical trials are considered. It is important to emphasize on candidate's practical contribution in the ethic regulation of drugs clinical trials.

The candidate Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva provided data for her scientific works being quoted twice above the minimum requirements in accordance with RDAPMUV, which is evidence for significance and evaluation of the publication activity in an international scientific aspect. All quotes are positive, there is information that the candidate maintains active profiles in scientific data bases, membership in scientific and professional organizations, participation in science forums and visibility of her activities.

I accept and highly appreciate the statement provided of her achievements, and I consider that it reflects correctly and in detail the author's achievements.

## **Notes and recommendations.**

I will limit my comments in this part of the review to collegial recommendations to the candidate. I share my wishes for active continuation of her publication activities, focus on articles in impact factor journals, elaboration, development and approbation of independent academic programs and promoting the drug policy, rational, effective and safe pharmacotherapy to Medicine and Pharmacy students, post-graduate students and practice specialists, using the wide range of instruments of contemporary scientific understanding and approaches in the fields where Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva already took part in and has her reputation.

## **Conclusion.**

Based on the materials provided by the candidate and reviewed by me on this competition, to which Assoc. Prof. Albena Zlatareva, MD, PhD is the sole candidate, I consider that she exceeds

the requirements of the LDAPB, its Implementing regulation and the RDAPMUV for holding the academic position "Professor".

I provide my entirely POSITIVE evaluation of the scientific and research and academic and teaching activities of the candidate, and I consider that Assoc. Prof. Zlatareva is an established, respected and sought after specialist, and based on my personal impressions, I can confidently confirm that she has the qualities, skills, qualification, experience and competence for holding the academic position "Professor".

Based on the LDAPB, its Implementing regulation and the RDAPMUV, I propose **Associate Professor Albena TODOROVA ZLATAREVA, MD, PhD** to the members of the HONOURABLE SCIENCE JURY to vote positively and to propose for election for the academic position "PROFESSOR" in the subject "PHARMACOLOGY AND PHARMACOTHERAPY (DRUG POLICY)" in the field of higher education 7. "Healthcare and Sport", professional direction 7.1. "Medicine", for the needs of department "Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmacotherapy" of the Faculty of Pharmacy of the Medical University "Professor Paraskev Stoyanov, MD" – city of Varna.

Reviewer:

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