

## OPINION

from

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**Professional field 7.4. Public Health**

on

**Dr. Momchil Kostov Baev**

candidate in an announced competition for the academic position "associate professor" in the Field of Higher Education 7. Health care and sports, Professional field, 7.5 Health care -1/8 state, published in the National official gazette 100/ 01.12.2023.

In the competition announced by the New Bulgarian University for a full-time associate professor in *Professional field 7.5. Health care*, published in the National official gazette 100/ 01.12.2023, one candidate participated - Dr. Momchil Kostov Baev.

This Opinion has been developed in accordance with the requirements for candidates defined by the Regulations for implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Article 2b. Minimum national requirements of the NBU.

Dr. Baev, out of the required 570 minimum points by groups of indicators for the academic position "associate professor", provides evidence for 819.3 points, which are distributed as follows: a monograph - 100 points; a sufficient number of scientific publications in indexed, refereed and non-refereed journals ( total 219.3 points) and management of national scientific or educational projects – 280 points, as well as citations – 60 points, participation in projects – 40 points, etc.

On the basis of the reference cited above and presented officially by Dr. Momchil Baev, prepared entirely according to the requirements of the National Centre for Information and Documentation /NACID/, he meets the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff of the NBU.

### **Education and qualifications**

Dr. Momchil Baev follows a long-term and purposeful line of development of knowledge, skills and competences in the field of health and social sciences, and in 2012 he obtained a bachelor's degree in the specialty "Social Activities" at the Faculty of Economics at VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius".

This was followed by a successfully completed a master's degree in "Public Health and Health care Management" at the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University - Sofia, where in 2020 he also obtained a Doctorate in "Social Medicine and Organization of Health Care and Pharmacy" in the *Field of Higher Education* 7. Healthcare and sports, Professional field 7.5. Health care.

In the period 2010 – 2021, Dr. Baev was a participant and expert in various training programs, as well as a consultant to the Ministry of Health. In the same period, professionally, Dr. Baev was the head of programs and the author of interventions related to the prevention of sexually transmitted infections among groups at risk.

In 2020, Dr. Baev founded the Astra Forum Foundation, which he leads to this day, with priority topics of work being infectious diseases, preventive and social medicine, mental health, training of medical specialists and advocacy activities for the development of public policies.

*He was awarded a plaque by the Ministry of Health and the "Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and STIs" program for his contributions to the fight against HIV in Bulgaria.*

In his monographic work "Quality of life and mental health of medical specialists in Bulgaria", published at the end of 2023, the candidate analyzes the quality of life and mental health of medical specialists in Bulgaria by presenting an author's study on the topic. This is an in-depth study of the often neglected psychosocial aspects of health professionals in a country with turbulent and controversial health reforms. The author delves into the unique challenges faced by Bulgarian medical workers, exploring how their professional environment affects their mental health and overall quality of life.

Regarding the **scientific research** activity of Dr. Momchil Baev, several main directions can be distinguished:

### *1. Health care for refugees and migrants*

In the research he conducts and publishes in a total of 3 scientific publications, Dr. Baev discovered and documented a number of shortcomings in the organization of healthcare for asylum seekers, collecting data from different perspectives. This provides the author with a resource and a basis for a multidisciplinary view of the issues, the aim of which is to objectively assess the problems and propose models for improvement.

### *2. Immunizations and COVID-19*

Among the scientific contributions of the candidate's research work, the empirical proof of the relationship between anti-epidemic measures on the one hand and morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 on the other, based on a large-scale study of all acts of the legislative and executive power,

and the national statistics of sick people, stands out. and died from the coronavirus. On this topic, the candidate has 3 scientific publications, one of which is indexed in SCOPUS.

*3. The Roma community and its social and health problems.*

In two co-authored international articles indexed in the Web of Sciences, the candidate examines community eating habits in the context of maternal and child health and early childhood development. Among other scientific contributions in the field, the research on access to health care stands out, incl. emergency aid in a Roma community, which was carried out on a door-to-door basis.

**As theoretical contributions, I can summarize:**

1. Dr. Momchil Baev is the author of the monograph "Quality of life and mental health of medical specialists in Bulgaria".
2. The candidate has a priority focus on working on specific populations that need adequate medical care under different circumstances and in not always the most favorable environment.

**As practical-applied contributions, I can summarize:**

1. Dr. Baev proposes a "Conceptual model for the preparation and response of the health care system in the conditions of a refugee crisis".
2. Dr. Baev is the author of a number of socially necessary and successfully implemented initiatives, such as the "Vaccine School".
3. Dr. Baev, in a team with other experts, is developing the "Handbook for Medical Professionals on Interpersonal Communication on Immunization", the purpose of which is to increase the confidence of citizens regarding vaccines against COVID-19.

After studying the publications and works provided for the competition, I believe that the statements formulated in the Statement of Contributions and Scientific Achievements are to a large extent contained in the submitted materials. They present Dr. Momchil Kostov Baev as a competent and reliable scientific researcher in the field of social initiatives and health care for disadvantaged persons, as well as work with communities with specific socially significant diseases.

**CONCLUSION:**

The practical focus of the candidate, accompanied by his active participation and coordination of extremely socially significant health causes and projects in modern terms, as well as the scientific production presented for participation in the competition by Dr. Momchil Kostov Baev give me the



reason to believe that all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" in **Professional field 7.5 Health care** have been met.

With complete conviction, I give a positive opinion and with conviction I recommend to the respected scientific jury the candidacy of Dr. Momchil Baev for the academic position of "associate professor" according to the competition announced by the New Bulgarian University.

Sofia

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