

ОПИНИОН

By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rositsa Nikolova Doynovska, Head of the "Health Care" Department, Faculty of "Public Health, Health Care and Sports", South-West University "Neofit Rilski" - Blagoevgrad, professional direction 7.5. Health care for participation in a competition for the academic position "Associate Professor", field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional field 7.5. Health care - 1/8 state, announced by New Bulgarian University in SG no. 100 from December 1, 2023 with candidate Momchil Kostov Baev.

The opinion was drawn up on the basis of order 3–ПК 92/ January 29, 2024 of the Rector of the New Bulgarian University for the appointment of a Scientific Jury, in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the LDASRB, the additional requirements according to the Ordinance on the development of the academic staff at the New Bulgarian University. I duly received the necessary documents and materials in electronic form.

In the announced competition, the only candidate is **Dr. Momchil Kostov Baev**. The presented documents and scientific works are in accordance with the normative requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor". Lists of scientific publications and evidentiary materials, a reference for citations of scientific works are presented.

Momchil Kostov Baev graduated from the "Social Activities" major with a bachelor's degree at Veliko Tarnovo University "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in 2012. In 2015, he graduated from the "Public Health and Health Management" specialty with a master's degree in the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University - Sofia. In the same university, in 2020, he obtained a PhD in "Social medicine and organization of health care and pharmacy" in the field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.4. Public Health. Dr. Baev has participated in courses and training programs related to his professional activity and scientific research.

I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University

The presented evidence of self-evaluation and the academic reference for publications, citations and scientometric indicators of Dr. Momchil Kostov Baev are in accordance with the



minimum national and additional requirements of the New Bulgarian University for holding the academic position "Associate Professor". The provided reference includes scientific production that significantly exceeds the minimum required volume for the groups of indicators - *the total points presented by the candidate are 819.3.*

One peer-reviewed monographic work and 9 publications were submitted for participation in the competition - 5 of them were published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information and 4 were published in non-refereed journals with scientific review. A reference is provided for 4 citations.

A group of indicators	Minimal requirements	Declared
A. 1. Dissertation work for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"	50	50
B. 3. Habilitation thesis - monograph	100	100
G. Amount due from indicators 5 to 9	200	219,3
G. 7. Publications and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information		125
G. 8. Publications and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes		94,3
D. 10. Citations or reviews in scientific publications referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes	50	60
E. 17. Participation in an international scientific or educational project	20	40
E. 18. Management of a national scientific or educational project	30	280
Z. 25. Availability of a research or creative program	10	10
Z. 26. Membership in national and/or international organizations and associations in the relevant professional direction	10	10
Z. 29. Applied research results and other intellectual property products and/or created works of art with international recognition	20	20
Z. 30. Participation in the board/management council of national and/or international organizations and associations in the relevant professional field	10	10
Z. 32. Conducted public lectures on behalf of the NBU at the invitation of VU or prestigious national/international organizations (or at the invitation of the NBU - for external candidates)	10	20
TOTAL:	570	819,3

* *The requirements of the NBU in groups Z, I for the academic position " Associate Professor "*



II. Research (creative) activity and results

The candidate Dr. Momchil Baev has submitted a peer-reviewed monographic work on the topic "Quality of life and mental health of medical specialists in Bulgaria" for participation in the competition. The monograph has a volume of 159 pages, 138 sources, mostly in Latin. The structure includes twelve chapters. The topic of the monographic work is extremely relevant, both from the point of view of individual health and at the level of public health. The author makes an in-depth analysis of the factors that influence the health dimensions of medical professionals - physical, emotional, mental. At the same time, the risk factors that have a negative impact on health are examined in great detail - the influence of the work environment, chronic work stress and the development of burnout syndrome, the emotional and mental stress when practicing the medical profession, the increased requirements and expectations for medical specialists, organizational problems in medical institutions, relations with patients and their relatives. Improving health and quality of life also requires fair pay, community support, professional career development, and the development and implementation of various institutional reforms and policies in the field of mental health services.

Dr. Momchil Baev pays particular attention to the consequences on the health of medical specialists before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected all health systems and brought to the fore the huge lack of medical personnel, overwork, stress, the lack of personal and social life of healthcare workers. The author presents his own research among representatives of different medical professions, in hospital and outpatient care, who have different professional status regarding the self-assessment of the quality of their health. The outlined factors, which are stressful for the profession, require the search for solutions to improve the quality of health and life of medical professionals. Based on the in-depth research and analysis of the obtained results, the author proposes various interventions to improve the conditions of the working environment, turning it into a supportive working environment, practical strategies to maintain a good balance between work and private life with a view to improving the quality of life and mental health of workers in the health care system.

1. Evaluation of the contributions in the other attached publications

Dr. Momchil Baev's scientific output is in line with modern trends in the development of public health. In terms of content, the presented scientific publications, citations, participation in scientific forums, project activities refer to current problems related to the activities of medical specialists and the community as a whole. The candidate in the competition has presented an objective and correct reference for the



scientific contributions, which I fully accept. It is noteworthy that in the publications the author demonstrates enviable skills to analyze familiar problems in medical practice in a new way, to draw reasonable conclusions and relevant recommendations for their resolution.

The scientific research activity of Dr. Momchil Baev is directed in the *following main areas*:

1. Sexual health and HIV

According to the materials submitted for participation in the competition, it is clear that the candidate has serious professional experience in the field of sexual health and HIV. Theoretical and practical contributions stand out in:

- The creation and piloting of the first home HIV testing program in Bulgaria, which is unknown in the country until now.
- A survey of men who have sex with men (MSM) on attitudes towards and access to HIV screening.
- Prepares and submits an opinion-recommendation to the HIV Advisory Council to the Minister of Health on the regulation of home HIV testing.
- Registration with the Medicines Executive Agency of the first medical device in our country for self-testing for HIV at home, without the participation of a medical specialist.
- In the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and as a member of the International AIDS Society, he leads and implements the HIV self-testing program while all the Cabinets for anonymous and free counseling and testing for AIDS in the Regional Health Inspectorates in the country remain closed.

There are two scientific publications presented on the subject, one of which is in Web of Science.

2. Immunizations and COVID-19

- Based on a large-scale study of all legislative and executive acts, and national statistics on cases and deaths from the coronavirus, the relationship between anti-epidemic measures, morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 is empirically proven.
- Creation of an online-based group "Science in Crisis" with the aim of "translating" scientific information into a language understandable to the general public.
- Conducting the first study of its kind on attitudes towards vaccines among Bulgarians against COVID-19 even before they are available to all citizens, but only to medical specialists.



- With the support of the WHO and UNICEF offices in Bulgaria, a National Communication Strategy for Vaccination against COVID-19 was developed, which was presented to the Ministry of Health and Council of Ministers.
- Creation of a long-term initiative called "Vaccine School" designed to replenish the knowledge of medical professionals in the country on topics related to vaccine prevention.

There are two scientific publications presented on the subject, one of which is in Scopus.

3. Roma community

- Field studies were conducted on the problems of access to health care in the Roma community, the quality and length of life, the health culture and habits, and the capacity for change in the community, highlighting the shortcomings and the impossibility of covering the Roma community through health insurance.
- Programs have been implemented for the training of students of Roma origin in the medical universities, training and training of paramedics of Roma origin for the needs of emergency aid in the city of Sofia.

Two articles are presented on the topic, Web of Science is included.

4. Refugees and migrants

- Dr. Momchil Baev developed a dissertation for the acquisition of the Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor" on the topic "Risks to the health system of the Republic of Bulgaria in the context of the refugee crisis in Europe", in which he takes a multidisciplinary view of the problem, an objective assessment of the problems and proposes a "Conceptual Model for the preparation and response of the health care system in the conditions of a refugee crisis". For the first time in Bulgaria, the attitudes of doctors, health care professionals and medical students towards working with migrants, as well as their assessments of the risks to the health care system in the conditions of the refugee crisis, have been established.

Three articles are presented in this direction, one of which is in Web of Science.

3. Citation by other authors.

Of the submitted documents of the candidate in the competition, four citations are presented in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information.



III. Learning and teaching activity

Dr. Momchil Baev is not a teacher at NBU, but he has a lot of experience as a trainer, researcher, leader and participant in projects among different communities, as is clear from the materials submitted for participation in the competition. This experience will also help to acquire and build on the pedagogical experience needed in the higher school.

Two public lectures were held at the NBU.

- Mental health and social work with patients with HIV infection, 2021.
- Organization of health care for refugees from Ukraine - theoretical and practical aspects, 2022.

IV. Administrative and public activity

Public activity.

Dr. Momchil Baev has an extremely high public activity related to the research of significant medico-social problems for society and vulnerable groups - minorities, risk groups, migrants and refugees. He is a member of prestigious national and international societies, a member of Expert Groups at the Ministry of Health. Dr. Momchil Baev is the founder and head of the Astra Forum Foundation. He is the head of programs with a social orientation for education and the right to work among minority groups. He is extremely involved in the activity of improving relations between state and non-governmental organizations in the field of health care and social work regulations. For his exceptional public activity, perseverance and achieved results, Dr. Baev is the recipient of a number of awards.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)

I do not know Dr. Momchil Baev personally, but I am impressed by his public commitment and the serious results he has achieved.

VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate

I have no notes on the applicant's presented achievements and activities.

After an in-depth study of the submitted materials for the competition and consideration of their significance, as well as the theoretical and scientific-applied contributions contained in them, successfully implemented in practice, in conclusion, I believe that the scientific production presented by Dr. Momchil Kostov Baev meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its Implementation and the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff



Образец за структура на рецензия/становище по конкурс за заемане
на академичните длъжности доцент и професор в НБУ

Приложение 3 към Наредба за развитието на академичния състав на НБУ

at the New Bulgarian University, exceeding the minimum requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor", which proves that there are sufficient grounds for a **positive evaluation** of the submitted materials by the candidate. There is no proven plagiarism in scientific works according to the law.

I propose to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to vote with a positive vote for awarding the academic position " Associate Professor ", field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.5. Health Care and the Academic Council of NBU to elect Momchil Kostov Baev to the academic position of " Associate Professor ".

March 16, 2024

Prepared the opinion

Signature

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rositsa Doynovska