



## STATEMENT OF OPINION

Of Professor Mariya Anastasova Semerdzhieva, Ph.D.

Dean of the Faculty of Public Health at Medical University - Plovdiv

External member of the Scientific Jury (Commission), pursuant to Order №

3364/29.09.2023 of the Rector of Trakia University, Stara Zagora

Regarding: Competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Health Care Management, professional field 7.4. Public Health, announced for the needs of the specialty "Kinesitherapy" at the Department of "Health Care" of the Haskovo Branch of Trakia University - Stara Zagora in State Gazette No. 52/16.06.2023.

The only candidate in the competition is Petya Stankova Kasnakova, senior lecturer at the Department of Health Care Management, Faculty of Public Health at Medical University - Plovdiv.

### **I. Analysis of the candidate's career profile.**

Petya Kasnakova graduated in 1997 from Medical College, Plovdiv, majoring as 'Physical Rehabilitation Therapist'. In 1999 she earned a Bachelor's degree in Health Care at Medical University - Plovdiv. She has completed two master's degree programs. She earned a Master's degree in Psychology at 'St. St. Cyril & Methodius' University of Veliko Tarnovo (2003) and in "Public Health and Health Management" at Medical University - Sofia (2004). She earned her PhD in Health Care Management at Medical University - Plovdiv with a dissertation on the topic of "Pedagogical competencies of the teacher in a medical college - a prerequisite for quality training of medical specialists" in 2014. She specialized in Medical Pedagogy at Medical University - Sofia (2006) and in Applied Psychology and Psychotherapy at Medical University - Plovdiv (2019).

Petya Kasnakova began her professional career as a physical rehabilitation therapist at the Regional Transport Hospital in Plovdiv, after which she started teaching. She has a long experience (22 years) as a lecturer at Medical College, part of Medical University of Plovdiv, at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", and since 2023 at Haskovo Branch of Trakia University - Stara Zagora.

In an effort to continuously upgrade her knowledge she has completed 19 different training courses, the main part (14) are in the field of kinesitherapy and rehabilitation. She has completed six Erasmus specializations in Macedonia, Belgium, Greece, Poland and Portugal. He has participated in four projects - three national and one intra-university.



In the period 2016 - 2022, she conducted practical trainings for Erasmus+ students from Turkey and North Macedonia.

Member of the Association of Physiotherapists in Bulgaria, the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Public Health.

She is fluent in English (level B1) and very good at Russian (level B1).

## **II. General description of the materials submitted for the purpose of the competition**

The materials submitted by the candidate for the competition provide the full range of information necessary for a quantitative and qualitative assessment of her overall academic development. The documentation is detailed and clearly organised in the form of references, lists and supporting material. The active research activity of P. Kasnakova and the large number of scientific output, a total of 110 scientific works were submitted for review: one dissertation, 4 publications related to the dissertation, 91 publications, 1 monograph and 9 chapters in monographs, 4 textbooks and teaching aids. A total of 105 are subject to review. The dissertation and its publications are not peer-reviewed..

### **1. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific works for the overall academic development**

The scientific output of P. Kasnakova is grouped precisely according to the guidelines for meeting the minimum national requirements for holding the position of Associate Professor in Area 7. Health and Sport, professional field 7.4. Public Health.

A comprehensive chronological view of the scientific publications presented by the candidate gives a complete impression of the upgrading and deepening of the research issues in the different areas of medical education and the role of the physiotherapist in the protection of public health.

Her publication activity is evenly distributed over the years, which is evidence of systematicity and consistency in research activity and is an expression of upward scientific development. A significant part of the presented publications are in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases, with 6 having an impact factor and 11 having SJR impact rank. The total impact factor of the candidate is 3,543.

In terms of publications, P. Kasnakova appears as the sole or first author in 72% of the total number of scientific papers, which is evidence of active research activity.

Scientific interests and contributions can be systematized in four main directions:

#### **Training and professional formation of medical specialists**



Quality management in higher medical education has been studied in depth. On the one hand, the competencies of tutors as a factor regarding high quality and on the other hand, the attitudes of students regarding the trends of quality assessment of education are investigated. Priority competencies of the lecturer as a professional, educator, manager, scholar and researcher are outlined. Attention is paid to the modern professional-educational model of the lecturer in the higher medical school; the factors of the educational environment and the role of the lecturer for quality education, training and realization of medical specialists.

Organizational aspects, educational strategies and current problems of training in the professional formation of rehabilitation therapists in a medical college are discussed in an independent monographic work.

The attitude of students studying at the Medical University towards the distance form of training and its quality is studied and analyzed. The possibilities of employing interactive presentation systems in this form of training are proved. It was found that their use enhances the interest of the trainees, stimulates them to actively participate in the learning process and helps to better master the taught material. It is shown that the effectiveness and quality of medical education is impossible without rethinking the forms, methods, content and organization of the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic.

● **Modern application of physical rehabilitation therapy in public health**  
**приложение на рехабилитацията в общественото здраве**

The possibilities for applying physical rehabilitation methods and tools in order to improve patient care and increase the efficiency of health systems, improve health promotion activities, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of a number of socially significant diseases are explored.

Studies and analyses of the potential of telemedicine and tele-rehabilitation among health professionals and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic are extremely relevant.

The positive effects of the rehabilitation process and the patient-centred approach in terms of preserving functional abilities in daily life of patients with chronic diseases have been categorically proven. The potential of multidisciplinary rehabilitation to improve quality of life has been demonstrated.

**Application of different immunostimulation methods in the pediatric patients**



Considerable research and analysis has been done on the incidence of disease in pre-school and primary school aged children and the need for immunostimulation methods in children. The awareness of parents regarding various methods of immunostimulation in children has been studied. The possibilities of application of physical and kinesiotherapeutic methods to strengthen immunity in children are analyzed.

A study has been conducted on the role of medical professionals in educating the parent, with emphasis on their educational function.

In a practical-applied aspect, a model is developed for the application of a comprehensive immunostimulating program in preschool and primary school-age children for the purpose of prevention and parent education programs.

#### ● **Varia**

The costs of preterm infants with respiratory complications and prenatal corticosteroid prophylaxis were analyzed.

Healthy lifestyles and physical activity among children and adults in the Bulgarian population were studied.

The areas in which P. Kasnakova works are extremely important, topical and promising. The publications in reputable journals with impact factor and impact rank, as well as numerous positive citations are proof of the importance of the research conducted with her participation.

### **2.Evaluation of the candidate's monographs**

The candidate has submitted for review one independent monographic work entitled "Milestones in the professional formation of physical rehabilitation therapists in the process of training at the Medical College". The monograph is extremely interesting and of great practical-applied significance, as it presents modern trends in the training of rehabilitation therapists. Significant professional experience in physical rehabilitation and accumulated teaching experience give the author the advantage to offer a very successful conceptual theoretical model of good practice in the training of student rehabilitators.

Petya Kasnakova has also presented contributions with chapters in 9 monographs. All of them are related to her competences in the field of rehabilitation and pedagogy. педагогиката.

### **3. Citations of the candidate's publications**

A total of 104 citations are presented in the reference for citations, and the interest in the candidate's scientific works is from both Bulgarian and foreign researchers..



### III. Comprehensive, qualitative evaluation of teaching and research activities

Petya Kasnakova has many years of teaching experience. She teaches theoretical and practical classes (tutorials), as well as lectures on many subjects to students studying in the Professional Bachelor's Program, in the specialty of "Physical Rehabilitation Therapy" and in the Master's Program, in the specialty of "Physical Rehabilitation, Wellness, SPA and Balneotherapy" at MU-Plovdiv, and the Bachelor's Program in the specialty of "Kinesitherapy" at the Haskovo Branch of Trakia University - Stara Zagora. She has participated in the development of curricula and programs of the specialties "Physical Rehabilitation Therapy" and "Physical Rehabilitation, Wellness, SPA and Balneotherapy". She has had a high average classroom occupancy for the last three academic years (666 teaching hours), of which 140 hours are related to lecturing.

### IV. Overall assessment of the applicant's compliance with the mandatory conditions and the mandatory quantitative criteria and science metrics

The volume and quality of the presented scientific output of Petya Kasnakova fully meets the requirements for holding the academic position "Associate Professor" according to the Regulations on the Structure and Activities of the Trakia University - Stara Zagora, the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The scientific output of P. Kasnakova definitely exceeds the minimum national requirements and those of Trakia University - Stara Zagora for the post of Associate Professor (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of the output of P. Kasnakova and the minimum points required for AD "Associate Professor" by groups of indicators

Indicators /Criteria/	Regulations of Trakia University – Stara Zagora	P. Kasnakova
Indicator A	50	50
Indicator B	-	-
Indicator C	100	100
(C) 3. Thesis – a monograph	-	100
Indicator D	200	1863,6
(D) 7. Publications and reports published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information	-	577,2
(D) 8. Publications and papers published in non-refereed	-	1119,7



peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes		
(D) 9. Published chapter in a collective monograph	-	166,7
Indicator E	<b>50</b>	<b>1070</b>
(E) 10. Citations or reviews in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes	-	630
(E) 11. Citations in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes.	-	240
(E) 12. Citations or reviews in non-peer-reviewed scientific journals		200
Indicator F	-	<b>164</b>
(F) 15. Acquired medical specialty		40
(F) 16. Participation in national scientific and educational projects	-	60
(F) 21. A published university textbook or textbook used in a school network	-	64

## V. Conclusion

On the basis of the materials submitted for the competition, I firmly believe that Petya Kasnakova fully meets the national criteria for the academic position of Associate Professor, exceeding many times all the indicators set by the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and its Implementing Regulations, as well as the Regulations of Trakia University - Stara Zagora.

My general impressions of the candidate are that all the professional and personal prerequisites for holding a higher academic position are present - thoroughness and systematicness in the work, high sense of responsibility and consistency in the search for novelties in the chosen scientific field.

On the basis of the above, I strongly recommend that the members of the Scientific Jury should support the awarding of Petya Kasnakova of the academic position of Associate Professor in Health Care Management, field of higher education 7. Health and Sport, professional field 7.4. Public Health.

01.11.2023

Plovdiv

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/Prof. Dr. M. Semerdzhieva, MD, Ph.D./