



## OPINION

From **PROF. RUSKA PASKALEVA, PhD**

**Faculty of Medicine, Trakia University - Stara Zagora**

**Appointed as member of academic jury with Order № 788/ 13.03.2023 of the  
Rector of Trakia University – Stara Zagora**

*Subject: Competition for academic rank Associate Professor in Health Care Management, basic specialty “Medical Laboratory Assistant”, professional field 7.4. Public Health, higher education field 7. Health Care and Sport; Medical College, Trakia University – Stara Zagora, announced in State Gazette 99/13.12.2022*

### **1. General description of the competition procedure**

The procedure related to the announced competition for conferral of the academic rank “Associate Professor” was correctly followed. Within the legal deadline, the only applicant having submitted documents was senior lecturer Katya Stefanova Kichukova, PhD. The materials presented by the applicant contain all necessary information for the evaluation and comply with the Statute for Development of Academic Staff at the Trakia University – Stara Zagora

### **2. Applicant’s biographical data and professional career**

Senior lecturer Katya Stefanova Kichukova was born in 1969 in Kotel. In 1993 graduated from the Medical College in Sliven, Medical Laboratory Assistant specialty. She gained a Bachelor degree in Health Care Management from the Faculty of Medicine, Trakia University – Stara Zagora in 2007 and in 2012, Master degree in Healthcare Management and Practical Training from the Medical University – Plovdiv.

In 2022 she was conferred the PhD educational and scientific degree in the scientific specialty “ Healthcare Management” after defense of a dissertation entitled: “Lifelong learning as a means for improvement of professional competence of medical laboratory assistants at the Medical University – Plovdiv.

In the period 1989-2009 the applicant has worked as medical laboratory assistant in Kotel and in MHAT “Prof. Stoyan Kirkovich” – Stara Zagora.

The teaching activities of Senior lecturer Katya Stefanova Kichukova started in 2009 as instructor to students in the Medical Laboratory Assistant Specialty, Medical College, Trakia University – Stara Zagora. From 2016 to present, she is senior lecturer in the same educational establishment.

The applicant is member of renowned scientific organization: Bulgarian Association of Health Care Professionals (BAHCP) and Preventive and informational center for addictions to the Municipality of Stara Zagora

Senior lecturer Katya Kichukova has participated in 23 qualification courses in different fields and has taken part in 23 scientific forums, 5 at international and 29 at a national scale.

*The analysis of the applicant's career outlines clearly her professional interests and sustainable efforts for professional development and improvement.*

### **3. Teaching and learning activities**

Senior lecturer Katya Stefanova Kichukova participates actively in practical training in Clinical laboratory, Parasitology and Clinical practical training of first, second and third-year students from the Medical Laboratory Assistant major at the Medical College – Stara Zagora and training of third-year students in the elective course “Quality Control of Laboratory Practice”, as well as in the elaboration of curricula of mentioned courses.

The teaching load is entirely in line with the normative for non-habilitated instructor approved in the Trakia University – Stara Zagora.

Senior lecturer Katya Stefanova Kichukova is fluent in both written and spoken English. She has good communication skills for work with students and computer skills for work with Microsoft Office - Word, Power Point.

#### **4. Research & development activities**

In this competition, Senior lecturer Katya Stefanova Kichukova participates with a total of 24 research works /1 in peer-reviewed and 23 in non peer-reviewed editions and proceedings/, 1 monograph and part of one book as co-author. The applicant provides proofs of 12 citations of her works /5 in refereed and 7 in non-refereed editions/.

The presented monograph entitled “Lifelong learning for medical laboratory assistants – present and prospects” thoroughly and in details the concept about rapid loss of knowledge adequacy in modern conditions of rapid development of medical sciences which necessitates the need from lifelong learning for medical laboratory assistants. The monograph makes an in-depth and thorough analysis of attitudes of medical laboratory assistants on continuing training and systematizes the idea of lifelong learning. The good practices for training of medical laboratory assistants in different European countries are investigated.

#### ***Subjects and contributions of research works***

The realisation of applicant’s scientific interests are reflected in a purposeful and sustainable scientific development and publication activity. The subjects of research works of Senior lecturer Katya Stefanova Kichukova correspond to the professional field of the announced competition:

- ***Increasing the professional competence of medical laboratory assistants and profiting from the possibilities of lifelong learning (scientific-theoretical, methodical and applied).*** Investigations on the need to increase the professional competence of medical laboratory assistants are subject of a significant part of the scientific works from the overall academic activity (including one dissertation, one monograph). In the conducted studies, original methods developed for the purpose studies were used (**dissertation, monograph, II.2**).

- ***Investigations on the introduction of new parameters and medicinal preparations (nutritional supplements) to improve diagnostics or influence the treatment of some socially significant diseases (scientific-theoretical, methodical and applied contributions).*** Participation in pilot studies in connection with analysis of some enzymes with influence on the levels of fat metabolism markers, with the aim of developing a methodology for their introduction into routine practice, as well as study on biochemical indices in humans and laboratory animals, and determining their interrelationship in several socially significant diseases. (**I.1.; III.B1**).

- ***Studies on some of the socially significant and dangerous infectious diseases and the role of the human factor in their spread (scientific-theoretical contributions).*** Studies on echinococcosis as a socially significant disease for the Stara Zagora region, with an average incidence for the period 2006-2014 above the national average have been performed. The relative share of affected children was 1/5 of all registered children (**I.1.; III.B1**). A historical overview of the efforts of all institutions in the fight against malaria and the vectors of malaria plasmodia is made (**III.A 3. III.A 4.**) Some of the significant ancient and newly emerging diseases with strong impact on human history are reviewed, incl. COVID-19 (**III.A4, III A5, IVB 8, II.1**)

- ***Innovative approaches and technologies in medical education (theoretical and applied contributions).*** The advantages of situational methods in medical specialties are examined, as well as the research methodical resources for development of key skills in students (**III B2, III B3, III B4, IVA1, IVA1**)

- **Medical laboratory sciences (theoretical and applied contributions). Oriented to different areas of the broad-based training of medical laboratory assistants.** The articles are focused on different areas of the broad-based training of medical laboratory assistants. A survey was conducted among students of Medical College - Stara Zagora regarding awareness about human papilloma virus (HPV) and tuberculosis (**III B2, III B6**). Survey among residents of the Chirpan region about the HIV infection routes and the possibilities of HIV prevention (**III B2**). A retrospective study of individuals with clinical manifestations of acute coronary syndrome (**III B1**). The therapeutic approaches and the groups of laboratory assays in the various stages of kidney diseases and other diseases in children are summarized and systematized (**III B3, III B 5, III B9, IVA4, IVB 3, III Γ 1**).

- **Improvement of collaboration with bases for practical training of medical laboratory assistants. Feedback from employers with regard to their assessment of the acquired professional skills of graduated medical laboratory assistants.** The continuous development of laboratory diagnostics implies a regular updating of the clinical practice curriculum. Students from the "Medical Laboratory Assistant" major prefer to conduct the clinical practice in small groups, which gives them the opportunity participate actively in the work (**III A 1, IV B 7**).

- **Varia.** Psychosocial aspects of natural disasters are examined. It was established that the mental trauma in conditions of a given disaster (natural cataclysms, acts of terrorism, pandemic flu, etc.) can be much severe than the physical one (**IV B 4, IV B 5**). The main aspects in the attitude of students of

medical specialties to narcotic substances at the Trakia University were studied. (IV B 6). Vit D concentrations as one of the leading risk factors for osteoporosis were studied among women from different age groups. Low Vit D level was found in two thirds of studied subjects (IVA3, IVB2).

The total personal score of the applicant for the Associate Professor competition is 544 points, compared to minimum score for the professional field 7.4 Public health, higher education field 7. Health Care and Sport of 450 points.

### **Conclusion**

*On the basis of facts outlined in my opinion, my positive appraisal of applicant's professional activities, applied documents, as well as the compliance to requirements, I am fully convinced in giving a positive evaluation and recommending the honorable academic jury members to confer the academic rank "Associate Professor" of Healthcare Management for the basic specialty "Medical Laboratory Assistant" in the Medical College, Trakia University – Stara Zagora; professional field 7.4. Public Health; higher education field 7. Health Care and Sport, to senior lecturer Katya Stefanova Kichukova, PhD.*

09 May 2023

Stara Zagora

Undersigned:.....

/Prof. Ruska Vasileva Paskaleva, PhD/