

REVIEW

by

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For participation in the competition for holding the academic position "Professor" in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sports", professional field 7.1 "Medicine", specialty "Social Medicine and Health Management" for the needs of the Department "Mental Health", Directorate "Mental Health and Addiction Prevention", NCPHA, which is announced in the State Gazette, No.99/26.11.2021 and at <http://ncpha.government.bg/> on 26.11.2021.

One candidate participates in the competition - Assoc. Prof. Hristo Ruskov Hinkov, MD, PhD.

Personal and professional background

Assoc. Prof. Hristo Ruskov Hinkov was born on March 25, 1953. In 1980 he graduated with a Master in Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Medical Academy (MA), Sofia. In 1987 he acquired the specialty "Psychiatry" - MA, Sofia, and since 2002 he has a master's degree in health management - Burgas State University. In 2011 Assoc. Prof. Hristo Hinkov obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Medicine, specialty "Social Medicine and Organization of Health and Pharmacy" at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses (NCPHA), Sofia. Since 2013 he has been an associate professor in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy".

During the period 1980-1987 Assoc. Prof. Hinkov worked as a general practitioner at the Municipal Hospital - Botevgrad, and later as a resident psychiatrist at the State Psychiatric Hospital in Novi Iskar. In 1987 he was appointed Research Fellow at the University Psychiatric Clinic, MA, Sofia, and from 1988 to 1997 - as the Head of the Psychiatric Counseling Room at Pirogov Hospital for active treatment and emergency medicine (HATEM) in Sofia. From 1997 to 1999 he was Head of the Department "Projects, Programs and International Cooperation" at the Ministry of Health, from 1999-2001 he was Deputy Director of the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF).

From 2001 to the present Assoc. Prof. Hristo Hinkov has been working at the NCPHA - until 2008 as Chief expert in the Mental Health Policy, Programs and Projects Sector, until 2009 - Head of the Global Mental Health Section, until 2011 - Deputy Director of the NCPHA, until 2014 - Head of the Mental Health Sector; since 2014 he has been the director of the NCPHA within the national healthcare system, part of Ministry of Health (MoH).

Assoc. Prof. Hinkov is an expert at the national and international level, a member of national working groups and advisory committees and scientific networks in the field of psychiatry and public health. He is a member of the National Commission for elaboration of the Health Card at the MoH 2019-2021; Chief Coordinator of the Expert Council for the Medical Specialty of Psychiatry at the MoH; Chairman of the Board of Directors of National specialized hospital for active treatment of hematological diseases (NSHATHD); member of the Bulgarian Medical Association (BMA), and for several years was in Management Board of the BMA; member of the Executive Board of the "National Scientific Program Environmental Protection and Reduction of the Risk of Adverse Events and Natural Disasters"; member of the Bulgarian Psychiatric Organization and the Bulgarian Collegium of Private Psychiatry; member of the

Scientific Council of the NCPHA; member of the Scientific Council at the Ministry of Environment and Water; member of the editorial board of the Bulgarian Journal of Public Health, published by the NCPHA; guest editor of the International Journal of Mental Health Systems - International Journal of Mental Health Systems ISSN: 1752-4458 Part of Springer Nature; member of the editorial board of the Journal of Mental Health – Publishing House STENO.

The candidate has participated in 25 national and international projects and programs in the field of public health, including as a coordinator and lead contractor. After taking the position of "Associate Professor", he participated as a principal investigator in the continuation of the project "Health and Stress Research in Bulgaria" EPIBUL 1 (since 2008 - present) and as a senior researcher in the project EPIBUL 2 (since 2015 - present). He is a member of the expert council at the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in connection with the preparation of a report "Measures to overcome the demographic crisis in the Republic of Bulgaria"; senior researcher for the RECOVER-E project (LaRge scalE implementation of COmmunity based mental health care for people with seVere and Enduring mental ill health in EuRopE) during the period 2018-2020; he is the leader of the project "Improved mental health services", Program BG07 "Public Health Initiatives"; and participates in the development of the National Mental Health Strategy (2020-2030) and the Action Plan to it.

Over the years, Assoc. Prof. Hinkov has participated in numerous training courses, including as a trainer/lecturer in Bulgaria, as well as in a number of European countries, the United States and Japan. He has a large number of interviews in the daily press and electronic media related to mental health, health policy and current issues of the society.

He is the research supervisor of two PhD students who have successfully defended their thesis.

General description of the materials submitted in the competition

The materials and documents submitted by Assoc. Prof. Hinkov fully comply with the requirements for holding the academic position "Professor" set out in the Regulations on the terms and conditions for obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the NCPHA.

For participation in the competition Assoc. Prof. Hinkov presented a wide range of documents: European curriculum vitae (CV) format; diploma for scientific degree "doctor"; medical certificate; criminal record certificate; copy of employment record book; certificate from the last place of work (NCPHA); reference for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements and the respective evidence/monographs, books and chapters from them, copies of the scientific publications and reports, referenced and indexed in world's most popular databases with scientific information; citations or reviews in peer-reviewed and indexed scientific journals, in monographs and collective volumes with scientific peer-review, and in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific peer-review; reference for the collected points by indicators according to the minimum requirements for the position "professor" (550 points); list of participations in scientific forums and copies of materials from participations in scientific forums; summaries of scientific papers (paper and electronic journals); habilitation extended reference for scientific contributions; documents for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor"; diploma for acquired medical specialty "psychiatry"; reference for participation in editorial boards, membership in a scientific organization in the respective scientific field, reviews; management of doctoral students; participation in research projects; reference quality criteria.

The presented materials and documents characterize the long-term work, the significant professional experience of the candidate and provide an opportunity for analysis and review of the scientific activity, the publishing activity and the scientific and creative achievements of Assoc. Prof. Hinkov.

Evaluation of the scientific works of the candidate for overall academic development

The scientific production and publication activity of Assoc. Prof. Hinkov is significant, mainly in the field of psychiatry and public health issues. Out of a total of 94 publications, the candidate has submitted 49 after obtaining the academic position of "Associate Professor". Assoc. Prof. Hinkov has 65 publications in foreign publications, 40 of which are after obtaining the academic position of "Associate Professor".

Assoc. Prof. Hinkov's scientific activity includes 68 participations in scientific forums (9 of them after obtaining the academic position of "Associate Professor"), of which 44 are in international congresses and conferences (3 after obtaining the academic position of "Associate Professor"). He has participated in numerous discussions and expert discussions at national and international round tables, seminars and webinars.

The reference for the number of citations presented by Assoc. Prof. Hinkov shows a good reflection and publication image of the author, as evidenced by the declared interest of the scientific community, not only in Bulgaria but also abroad. 2463 citations are given, according to a reference in the available databases (Scopus and Web of Science).

The presented reference for the scientific contributions of the works of Assoc. Prof. Hinkov covers the period from 2014-2021, including areas of scientific, scientific-applied and political-analytical nature. The included works are in Bulgarian and English and are mainly scientific articles in prestigious publications, participation in monographs and reports of scientific and applied science, scientific communications and health policy analysis.

The scientific contributions of the publications are divided into four areas:

- Epidemiology of mental disorders and study of the psychosocial determinants of mental disorders;
- Comparative analysis of epidemiological databases;
- Research on the organizational, legal, informational and financial aspects of the provision of mental health services in Bulgaria;
- Health policy and health reform, suicidology, Covid-19 pandemic.

Epidemiology of mental disorders and study of psychosocial determinants of mental disorders

Publications in this area are the most numerous (33). Scientific contributions in the field of mental health have a high degree of scientific representation and international significance. Most of them have been published in prestigious scientific journals. An international database from the World Mental Health (WMH) Surveys Consortium, led by the WHO and Harvard and Michigan Universities, was used.

Within the EPIBUL 1 project, the Bulgarian database has been created, which has its contribution and continues to be included in international comparative studies of common mental disorders worldwide. The topics of the publications vary widely and concern the most common mental disorders (depression, generalized anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder), the organization of psychiatric systems in different countries, the epidemiology of addictions,

causes of domestic violence, the relationship between religion and mental disorders, the impact of mental health conditions on the work performance/ability.

The epidemiological study of the anxiety, depressive, reactive, affective, etc. disorders, conducted by the Bulgarian team led by Assoc. Prof. Hinkov, is the only one in Bulgaria. The questionnaire used for this study includes a large number of variables, which allows for a variety of comparisons and statistical analyses. In the course of its implementation a new term "common" mental disorders was adopted, which became popular in the Bulgarian scientific psychiatric circles. The results of the study are internationally comparable and are of great importance, the most significant being those of the various nosological units concerning common mental disorders among the Bulgarian population. The collected data allow to assess the etiology of mental disorders, environmental factors, traumatic life events and impaired social functioning, as well as the needs of mental health care and mental health services.

Comparative analysis of epidemiological databases

Within the framework of the BG07 Public Health Initiatives Program, with the financial support of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area, a second epidemiological study was conducted - EPIBUL 2 (2016-2017). The same tools were used as in EPIBUL 1, but on a smaller representative sample. The new database was created with the active cooperation and supervision of the world mental health survey initiative (WMHSI) team, using modern Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) technology, allowing for more expeditious interviews. The results of the study were published in two of the candidate's articles (43, 45).

A significant contribution of the study is the dynamics of the prevalence of common mental disorders over a ten-year period. The results show that their percentage does not change significantly, but there is an increase in additional diagnoses (comorbidity) accompanying the anxiety disorder. Tracking this dynamic allows the candidate to build a unique hypothesis about the reaction of the Bulgarian population to stressful events, presented in the monograph "Bulgarian anxiety". Based on an in-depth study of the phenomena of anxiety and psychosomatic dependence, a new vision for the reaction of the Bulgarian nation to stressors in historical and philosophical contexts is presented. The hypothesis is based on a comparative study of the two databases of epidemiological data on anxiety in Bulgaria and internationally.

Research on the organizational, legal, informational and financial aspects of the provision of mental health services in Bulgaria

Some of the scientific developments in this direction include organizational schemes, information technologies and financial instruments in the practice of offering mental health services in Bulgaria, as well as the legal framework for their provision and have scientific and applied value (29, 30, 40). The established difference between the specifics of the organization of mental health care in different countries explains the difficulties in developing a comprehensive concept and plan for reforming the psychiatric system in Bulgaria.

The proposed model of mobile psychiatry in outpatient care, developed as part of an international project, is a contribution to the scientific justification of the reorganization of psychiatric services in the country. The development of this idea creates a basis for the overall adoption of this concept and its inclusion in the Action Plan of the National Mental Health Strategy (2020-2030). A major contribution in this regard is the establishment of an evidence-based practice for the application of new technologies in the health services for

people with mental disorders (39).

A comparative analysis was conducted with neighboring countries in Central and Eastern Europe, covering various aspects of mental disorders and the organization of mental health care, using consensus criteria (indicators) developed by international research teams - (19, 21).

Health policy and health reform, suicidology, Covid 19 pandemic

A significant practical and scientific-organizational contribution of the candidate is his active participation in the development of the National Mental Health Strategy (2020-2030), with an Action Plan, justification, motives and management framework (42).

It should also be noted the applied scientific contribution to the creation of a team of professional psychiatrists involved in the development and promotion of modern concepts of psychiatric care.

An information portal on suicide has been set up as part of a project funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. The data concern various aspects of suicidal behavior among Bulgarian citizens. The established system for online data collection is unique for Bulgaria compared to the countries in the region and the EU. Moreover, data on methods, motives, marital status and other demographic characteristics concern not only the suicidal acts that ended in death, but also suicide attempts, which serves as a basis for building an adequate preventive strategy (46).

Some of the publications also consider aspects of the ability to work and participation in the labor market of mentally ill persons, based on extensive statistical evidence from the two databases of EPIBUL 1 and 2, which is done for the first time in our country. Features of the Bulgarian behavior in seeking professional help through somatic specialists - neurologists, GPs, etc. are established. This is largely due to the influence of stigma on mental disorders, but also to a new phenomenon - the strong degree of somatization of mental problems among the Bulgarian ethnic group (monograph "Bulgarian anxiety").

A current issue is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of the Bulgarian population, which is discussed in two of the articles (44,47). The scientific contribution consists in a new view of reality, which will explain the emerging a mental phenomenon anxiety caused by the pandemic on the population's mental health and propose the development of adequate measures to deal with them.

General assessment of the candidate's compliance with the mandatory conditions and mandatory quantitative and scientometric indicators according to the Regulations on the terms and conditions for obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the NCPHA

The publications presented by Assoc. Prof. Hinkov show his excellent training in the field of public health, including mental health, the opportunity for in-depth analysis of scientific data, independent development and application of scientific and scientific-applied methods and programs.

The career development of Assoc. Prof. Hinkov and the presented documents, scientific publications and materials give me reason to say that he is an experienced professional, trained and competent scientist in the field of public health and psychiatry. Assoc. Prof. Hinkov's scientific activity complies with all mandatory conditions and requirements for holding the academic position of "Professor", specified in the Regulations on the terms and conditions for

obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the NCPHA and the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria to hold the academic position of "Professor".

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the presented documents for the research and publication activity of Assoc. Prof. Hristo Hinkov gives me full reason to claim that the candidate's career development meets the mandatory and specific conditions and scientometric criteria for holding the academic position "Professor" in "Social medicine and health management", field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine.

I am confidently voting "FOR" and propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award Assoc. Prof. HRISTO RUSKOV HINKOV, MD, PhD the academic position "PROFESSOR" in the specialty "Social Medicine and Health Management" in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sports", professional field 7.1 "Medicine" for the needs of the Department "Mental Health", Directorate "Mental Health and Addiction Prevention" at the NCPHA.

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