

## OPINION

НАЦИОНАЛЕН ЦЕНТЪР ПО ОБЩЕСТВЕНО ЗДРАВЕ И АНАЛИЗИ	
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by Professor Plamen Stoyanov Dimitrov, MD, PhD in a competition for the academic position of "Professor", field of higher education 7. "Healthcare and sports", professional field 7.1. "Medicine", in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Health Management", for the needs of the Department of Mental Health, Directorate of Mental Health and Addiction Prevention at the National Center for Public Health and Analysis, announced in State Gazette, issue 99 / 26.11. 2021 and at <http://ncpha.government.bg/> on 26.11.2021

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

The candidate has submitted all necessary documents for participation in the competition, meeting the requirements of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations on the terms and conditions for obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the National Center for Public Health and Analysis

Assoc. Prof. H. Hinkov, meets the minimum national requirements under Art. 1a of the Regulations for Implementation of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

### ***Brief data on the candidate's career development***

Assoc. Prof. Hristo Ruskov Hinkov graduated in medicine in 1980 at the Faculty of Medicine, Medical Academy, Sofia. Since 2002 he has a master's degree in health management from the University of Burgas "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov ". In 1987 he acquired a medical specialty in Psychiatry at the Medical Academy, Sofia, and in 2011 after defending a PhD dissertation on "Mental health services in Bulgaria - availability, accessibility, turnover, efficiency" Assoc. Hinkov obtained an PhD in medicine in the specialty "Social Medicine and Organization of Health care and Pharmacy". Since 2013 he has been an associate professor in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Organization of Health care and Pharmacy". The work experience of Assoc. Prof. Hinkov began at the Municipal Hospital - Botevgrad, where he worked in the period 1980-1987, then he had been a Head of the Psychiatric Counseling Office at the Pirogov National Research Institute, Head of the Projects, Programs and International Cooperation Department at the Ministry of Health, Deputy Director of the National Health Insurance Fund. Assoc. Prof. Hinkov's career at the NCPHA began in 2001, and until 2008 he was a chief expert in the department of Mental Health Policy, Programs and Projects, until 2009 - Head of the Global Mental Health Department, until 2011 - Deputy Director of the National Center for Public Health Protection, until 2014 - Head of the Mental Health Department, and since 2014 he has been the Director of the National Center for Public Health and Analysis at the Ministry of Health. Assoc. Prof. Hinkov is an expert at national and international level, a member of national and international working groups and advisory committees and research networks in the field of psychiatry and public health. Assoc. Prof. Hinkov is one of the initiators who organized and restored the Bulgarian Medical Union in 1990, and for several years was a member of its Board. He has

participated as a leader, coordinator and lead coordinator in over 25 national and international projects and programs in the field of mental and public health. 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 was the supervisor of two doctoral students who have successfully defended.

***General characteristics of the research and applied research activities of the candidate***

The publications and references submitted for participation in the competition prove the high scientific productivity of the candidate mainly in the field of mental health, public health and psychiatry. For the current competition Assoc. Prof. Hinkov participates with 49 scientific papers, divided as follows:

Published habilitation thesis - monograph - 1 issue (100 points)

Publications and reports published in scientific journals referenced and indexed in world databases with scientific information - 45 issues (239.4 points)

Publications and reports published in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes - 2 issues (13.75 points)

Published chapter of a collective monograph - 1 issue (9 points)

All publications are correctly described, and the publications after acquiring the academic position of "Associate Professor" are presented in full to the materials for the competition.

Assoc. Prof. Hinkov's scientific activity includes 68 participations in scientific forums, discussions and expert discussions at national and international round tables, seminars and webinars (9 of them after obtaining the academic degree of "Associate Professor").

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 research covers scientific issues aimed at a wide range of highly relevant and significant issues in the field of scientific specialty of the announced competition. The main thematic areas of the candidate's research activity combine the achievements of his overall creative and professional path with public health and mental health, and can be divided into the following areas:

- *Epidemiology of mental disorders and study of the psychosocial determinants of mental illness;*

Most of their publications in this field have been published in prestigious scientific journals and present analyzes based on data from the World Mental Health Consortium (WMH), led by the WHO and the universities of Harvard and Michigan, USA. The creation of a Bulgarian database of common mental disorders within the implementation of the EPIBUL 1 project, as part of the World Mental Health Consortium, is of a contributing nature. An epidemiological study of common mental disorders - anxiety, depression, reactive, affective and others disorders, is the first and the only one in Bulgaria. The results are internationally comparable and are extremely important, the most significant being those of the various nosological units concerning common mental disorders among the Bulgarian population. Based on the collected data, an assessment of the etiology of

mental disorders, environmental factors, traumatic life events and disorders of social functioning, as well as the needs of psychiatric care and psychiatric services. The results of EPIBUL 1 are the basis for the development of mental health policies in our country.

- *Comparative analysis of epidemiological databases;*

A second epidemiological study EPIBUL 2 was conducted using the tools of EPIBUL 1, which monitors the dynamics of the prevalence of common mental disorders over a ten-years period. Comparative analysis shows that the proportion of common mental disorders does not change, but an increase in the incidence of comorbidity is found. Based on the two studies and the comparative analysis of the results, Assoc. Prof. Hinkov presents a new vision of the reaction of the Bulgarian nation to stressors in historical and philosophical contexts. It is developed in depth in the presented monograph "Bulgarian anxiety".

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

A significant part of the scientific production of Assoc. Prof. Hinkov is aimed at analyzing the state and legal framework of the provision of mental health services in Bulgaria. An analysis of the specifics of the organization of psychiatric care in different countries has been made. As a result of the implementation of an international project, a comparative analysis was conducted with neighboring countries in Central and Eastern Europe, covering various aspects of mental illness and the organization of psychiatric care. A model of mobile psychiatry in outpatient care is proposed, which is a contribution to the scientific justification of the reorganization of psychiatric services in the country.

- *Health policy and health reform, suicidology, impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on mental health.*

The candidate has a significant contribution to the development of health policy and the implementation of health reform in Bulgaria, and should be noted his contribution to the prepared National Strategy for Mental Health (2020-2030). The analysis of motives, marital status and other demographic characteristics in relation to suicidal acts and suicide attempts is of a contributing nature, which serves as a basis for building an adequate preventive strategy. The basis of the above analysis is the information portal of suicidal actions, within a project funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, of which Assoc. Prof. Hinkov is the head. The scientific publications concerning the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the mental health of the Bulgarian population are extremely relevant. A new view of reality has been proposed to explain the emerging disturbing mental phenomena caused by the pandemic on the mental health of the population. On this basis, it should be proposed to develop adequate measures to address them.

The candidate's works have been published in prestigious scientific journals in Bulgaria and abroad, such as: Bulgarian Journal of Public Health, Social Medicine, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Dependence, BMC Psychiatry, Bipolar Disorders, Depression and Anxiety, Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, British Journal of Psychiatry, World Psychiatry, BMC Medicine, JAMA Psychiatry. Evidence of the quality of the publications and their reflection in the international and Bulgarian scientific literature is presented. The reference presented by Assoc. Prof. Hinkov from the Central Medical Library for citations by Bulgarian and foreign authors contains 3321 citations in

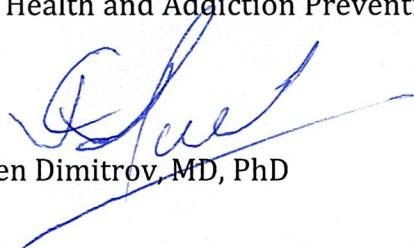
the Scopus database and 3145 citations in the Web of Science Database (databases are partially covered), which is indicative of the relevance of the topic and the candidate's visibility from the world and Bulgarian scientific community. Assoc. Prof. Hinkov takes an active part as an expert and coordinator in national and international research projects, 5 of which after holding the academic position of "Associate Professor".

### **Conclusion**

Based on the materials presented in the competition and the analysis of the assets in the research activity, I give a high assessment to Assoc. Prof. Hristo Ruskov Hinkov, MD, PhD. In all respects he fully meets the quantitative and qualitative indicators and criteria for the academic position of "professor".

In connection with the above, I recommend to the esteemed scientific jury, Assoc. Prof. Hristo Ruskov Hinkov, MD, PhD to be awarded the academic position "Professor", field of higher education 7. "Health and Sports", professional field 7.1. "Medicine", in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Health Management", for the needs of the Department of Mental Health, Directorate of Mental Health and Addiction Prevention at the National Center for Public Health and Analysis.

March 9, 2022

  
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