

STANDPOINT

by Assoc. Prof. Dancho Sofroniev Dilkov, MD
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Regarding to the competition for the occupation of the academic position " Associate Professor " in the field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.1. Medicine, in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Health Management", for the needs of the "Mental Health" Department, Directorate "Mental Health and Prevention of Addictions" in the National Center for Public Health and Analyzes (NCPHA), announced in SG No. 90 /11.11.2022.

To participate in the announced competition is admitted the only candidate chief assistant Dr. Vladimir Venkov Nakov, DM. The candidate has submitted all the necessary documents for the competition, corresponding to the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation and the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Tenure of academic positions in NCPHA.

1. Career profile of the candidate

Dr. Nakov graduated in medicine in 1997 at the Medical University, Pleven with a diploma series MIEN-97, registration no. 000182. In 2002, he acquired the specialty "Psychiatry" at MU-Pleven (registration no. 007844, city of Pleven, 24.01. 2003, Series VMI-2002 No. 0525). In 2015, he successfully defended his dissertation "Epidemiological study of suicide attempts in the Republic of Bulgaria" (Diploma No. 016/20.01.2015 NC SOZA) and obtained the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the specialty "Social medicine and organization of health care and pharmacy". In the period 2012-2015 he completed a three-year qualification course in mental health at the University of California - Berkeley.

Dr. Nakov's professional path began with a specialization in psychiatry at the clinic of psychiatry at the Pleven Medical University, and during this period he carried out internships at the clinic of forensic psychiatry of the USBLNP "St. Naum" . Since the middle of 1998, he has been working in the Municipal Hospital - city of Levski as a district psychiatrist. In the period 2000-2006, he worked as a psychiatrist in a day hospital at the "Dr. Georgi Stranski" UMBAL, Pleven; external psychiatrist-consultant in Pleven Prison; resident psychiatrist in the consultative emergency department at the City Dispensary for the Treatment of Mental Illnesses - Sofia. From 2007 to the present, he is an expert, chief expert and chief assistant at the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, Mental Health Department ". He currently heads this department.

In Dr. Nakov's active project work, the individual research project at the Center for Academic Research - Sofia (2020) stands out, as well as in RECOVER-E. Large-scale implementation of community-based mental health care for people with severe mental illness in Europe and in a project of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" "Mental ill health and social inequalities". Also, he is a member of the management of the COST Action 91133

FOSTREN project for the reduction of coercion in psychiatry in Europe. He is actively involved as an expert and coordinator in 8 national and international scientific projects and programs.

Dr. Nakov was a member of the Board of the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association and the Supervisory Board of the BPA. He is currently a member of the Bulgarian Medical Union; Section on Suicidology of the European Psychiatric Association; Mental Health Association for South East Europe.

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

2.1 General characteristics of scientific activity and publication activity

The publications and references submitted for participation in the competition prove the candidate's high scientific productivity mainly in the field of psychiatry, mental health and public health. Dr. Nakov participated in the current competition with 28 publications, distributed by types as follows: 1 abstract; 3 monographs in which he is author and co-author; 17 publications in Bulgarian and 7 in foreign magazines and anthologies. The scientific activity presented by Dr. Nakov includes 26 participations in scientific forums, mainly abroad, and in some of them a speaker was invited by the organizers of the forums.

The publications are in prestigious scientific publications at home and abroad - Bulgarian Journal of Public Health, Social Medicine, Depression and Anxiety, European Psychiatry, Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, Psychiatria Danubina. Their high quality is clearly evidenced by the visible reflection in the scientific literature: the reference from the Central Medical Library for citations by Bulgarian and foreign authors contains 143 citations in the Scopus and Web of Science databases.

The quantitative analysis of the scientific publications shows that they cover the national scientometric criteria for holding the academic position "Associate Professor" in the indicated direction.

2.2 Qualitative characteristics of the scientific activity

Dr. Nakov differentiates five areas of his scientific work in terms of content, namely: *Organization of health care and in particular psychiatric care, legislation, patients' rights and stigma among patients with mental illnesses; Clinical-therapeutic and clinical-diagnostic studies; Epidemiological studies in the field of suicidology and mental illness; History of Medicine and Psychiatry; Public health, crises, the COVID-19 pandemic.*

1. Organization of health care and in particular psychiatric care, legislation, patients' rights and stigma in patients with mental illnesses.

Dr. Nakov's contributions in this direction are focused on the rights of patients with mental illnesses, the organization of the activities of institutions for long-term accommodation of persons with these illnesses, dementias and other problems.

2. Clinical-therapeutic and clinical-diagnostic studies.

Publications, presentations and participation in scientific meetings in this field cover a wide range of mental illnesses and diagnostic problems, also targeting general practitioners.

3. Epidemiological studies in the field of suicidology and mental illness.

The majority of Dr. Nakov's scientific publications are in this direction, as well as two monographs "Suicides in Bulgaria 2009-2013" (2015) and "Suicides in Bulgaria. Historical context. Current Data" (2022). The candidate's new monograph combines a historical analysis of the local interest in the phenomenon of suicide, the collection of data, the explanatory models that have been applied and the difficulties of fitting them into the various ideological constellations that have prescribed a certain attitude to suicide, with presentation and analysis of current statistics. The collection and compilation of the information is the contribution of Dr. Nakov, as he is responsible for the web-based portal on suicidal acts.

An essential part of Dr. Nakov's research activity is epidemiological research on common mental disorders (depression, generalized anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder). In this regard, two large-scale epidemiological studies were conducted and analyzed. The data collected allow an assessment of the etiology of mental disorders, environmental factors, traumatic life events and impairments in social functioning, as well as the needs for psychiatric care and psychiatric services.

The scientific contributions of his work in the field of mental health have a high degree of scientific representativeness and international significance. The main part of them are published in prestigious indexed and refereed scientific publications.

4. History of medicine and psychiatry.

The candidate presents an analysis of historical data on the development of psychiatry, which traces the construction of the psychiatric network, personnel, activities, etc. Particular attention is paid to the insufficient commitment of the state regarding the functioning of psychiatric services.

5. Public health, crises, the COVID-19 pandemic.

This section includes publications that are aimed at training employees of public organizations on mental health issues in registration and reception centers for asylum seekers and special homes for temporary accommodation of foreigners in Bulgaria. For the first time in Bulgaria, the question of the legal regulation of medical marijuana and the possibility of it being used for medicinal purposes has been raised. Themes related to nitrous oxide were developed, as well as a model for a low-threshold methadone maintenance treatment program primarily aimed at harm reduction from drug use. A scientific contribution is the analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of the Bulgarian population.

3. Educational and teaching activity

Dr. Nakov's university teaching activity dates back to 2013, when he led a master's course in "Social Activities" at Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" Blagoevgrad. He is

currently a part-time assistant at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the specialty of speech therapy, leading the subject "Fundamentals of Psychiatry" and the teaching staff of the Master's program "Bioethics, Society, Culture" of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski". He also teaches in the annual SDO courses organized by the NCPHA, participates in the training conferences of the PIC and in other trainings organized at their request.

Conclusion

Based on the presented documents and materials, I believe that Chief Assistant Dr. Vladimir Venkov Nakov is an established expert in his field with serious research achievements. He fully meets the quantitative and qualitative indicators and criteria for the academic position "associate professor".

I give my positive assessment and confidently recommend the respected scientific jury to vote for the award of " Associate Professor ", field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.1. Medicine, in the scientific specialty "Social medicine and health management", under the assistant professor. Dr. Vladimir Venkov Nakov, MD.

27.02.2023.

Assoc. Prof. Dancho Sofroniev Dilkov, MD

