

REVIEW

from

Assoc. Prof. Petar Tsankov Markov, MD

Head of Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinic

ACIBADEM CITY CLINIC UMBAL "TOKUDA", SOFIA

Internal member of the Scientific Jury

Pursuant to Order No. 15-05-09#2/30.01.2024

regarding competition for the acquisition of the academic position

"Associate Professor"

In the field of higher education 7. "Health and sports", professional direction 7.1 "Medicine" and scientific specialty „Obstetrics and Gynecology”, for the needs of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinic at Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL “Tokuda” Sofia, published in the State Gazette issue 98 from 24.11.2023.

Regarding: SCIENTIFIC AND TEACHING ACTIVITY of:

Dr. Maria Gicheva Atanasova-Elenkova, MD

For the procedure:

Dr. Maria Atanasova is the sole candidate allowed for participation.

The regulations of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for its application in Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL “Tokuda” Sofia, respectively - the clauses for acquiring the academic position "Associate Professor" have been followed.

Biographical data and career profile of the candidate

Dr. Maria Atanasova, MD was born in 1930. She completed her medical education in 2004 in MU-Sofia, with excellent marks and the "Golden Hippocrates" award. Subsequently, she acquired a specialty in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology of MU-Sofia. In 2014 she defended a dissertation on the topic:

"Management of epidural analgesized delivery" at the Medical Faculty of MU-Sofia, with which she obtained the scientific and educational degree "doctor". Since 2014, she has obtained a master's degree in the specialty "Public Health and Health Management" at the Faculty of Public Health of MU-Sofia. In the period 2005-2018, Dr. Atanasova worked at SBALAG "Maichin Dom" Sofia, where she successively held the positions of: clinical resident and assistant. From 2018 until now, Dr. Atanasova works in the Department of Gynecology, Pelvic Surgery and Obstetrics at Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL „Tokuda" Sofia, which from 2022 has been transformed into a Clinic of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Evaluation of teaching activities

Dr. Maria Atanasova has taught medical students, Obstetrics and Gynecology residents and OB&GYN specialists, has been conducting practical exercises, lectures, basic courses and thematic courses within the scope of her specialty. In addition, she has led lecture courses and practical exercises for midwives from the 2nd to the 4th year at the Department of Health Care, according to the official notes presented by the Medical Faculty and Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University in Sofia.

Evaluation of scientific metrics

Dr. Maria Atanasova submits 35 scientific papers in the current review, of which 27 have been published in Bulgaria, 8 abroad. 26 publications are in full text, of which 2 are in English. The publications presented as resumees are 9, and 6 of them are in English. 25 of the scientific works were published in referenced journals, 8 of the publications were in journals with an Impact factor.

A total of 35 citations were found in the databases: SCOPUS, Web of Knowledge, Google Scholar, of which 33 citations were in foreign journals. According to the attached reference from the Central Medical Library, 31 citations of Dr. Maria Atanasova's scientific works have been found, of which 13 citations are from Bulgarian sources and 18 citations are from foreign sources.

In the scientific area, the use of the so-called Hirsch index is accepted for the objective assessment of the value of scientific works for each author individually, based on the number of publications and their citations. According to the reference made, the publications of Dr. Atanasova have **h-index = 2**.

Evaluation of scientific research and contributions

The main directions in the research activity of Dr. Maria Atanasova are: high-risk pregnancy, operative Obstetrics, labor analgesia, fetal medicine.

High-risk pregnancy is a major problem in modern Obstetrics, due to the increase in the frequency of pregnant women with accompanying pregnancy complications that threaten the health and life of both the mother and the fetus. The main reasons for the frequency of these cases are: increased age of the pregnant women, overweight, diabetes and hypertension, previous surgical interventions - caesarean sections and myomectomies, increase in cases with the use of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART), increase in the frequency of premature births.

From my direct personal observations, I can summarize that the main part of Dr. Maria Atanasova's practical work throughout her professional career so far has been carried out and focused in the field of high-risk pregnancy. Dr. Maria Atanasova's interests in pregnant women with severe pregnancy complications are professionally fixed, both during the period of her work at SBALAG "Maichin Dom" Sofia, and during her current professional realization at Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL "Tokuda", Sofia. These two medical institutions offer the highest level of competence in the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology, which leads to concentration of cases with severe complications of pregnancy, respectively to conditions for acquiring great practical experience. Therefore, it is logical to assume that a significant part of Dr. Maria Atanasova's research activity will be focused precisely on the pathology of high-risk pregnancy. This is evident in a major share of the applied scientific works. Complications of pregnancy in overweight pregnant women, cardiovascular disease and pregnancy, multiple pregnancy, infectious diseases and pregnancy, diabetes and pregnancy, premature births, antenatal risk for the fetus, etc. are researched and described.

Operative Obstetrics occupies a significant role in the specialty of Obstetrics and Gynecology. The methods of leading the delivery, including the methods to relieve the second period of labor, are extremely important because they are implemented in situations of extreme urgency, with the direct and immediate responsibility for the good outcome, both for the mother and for the newborn. These are moments that require in-depth theoretical knowledge, combined with the corresponding highly specialized practical training of the person leading the delivery. The methods of terminating the pregnancy in its different gestational age and according to the available indications are also a major problem in operative Obstetrics. Cases of pathological pregnancy termination in the second trimester are at increased risk. Termination of pregnancy by using oral medications is increasingly being implemented in practice.

Every specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecology is aware of the drama, risks and potential complications when using the so-called forceps extraction in the second period of labor. This is one of the classic methods in operative Obstetrics, the use of which cannot be avoided in certain situations, even in present time. The correct application of this method requires a complex of theoretical training, practical skills, experience and psychological

stability on the part of the delivery attendant. Forceps extraction is well researched and presented in several of Dr. Maria Atanasova's scientific works.

Ruptures of the birth canal soft tissues are also an invariable part of practice in operative Obstetrics. Episiotomies and perineal ruptures are the most common induced or spontaneous lacerations of the vulvovaginal region in vaginal deliveries.

Analgesia in labor is a matter of fundamental importance in Obstetrics. Providing a certain level of comfort and tranquility to the woman in labor in the first and second stages of labor is essential for her collaboration and for the favorable outcome of the birth for the mother and the newborn. Analgesia in the early postpartum period greatly facilitates the examination of the soft birth canal and possible manipulations to repair its lacerations. In all modern maternity clinics, the method of epidural analgesia for vaginal delivery is widely practiced. It offers a number of advantages: a very high level of analgesia, individual titration of the dosages of the analgesics used over a certain time interval, preserved motor ability of the woman in labor, the possibility of analgesia in the postpartum period, minimal risks for the fetus.

Epidural analgesia during vaginal birth is a main topic of research in the publications of the scientific activity of Dr. Maria Atanasova, starting from her dissertation work. As a specialist who practically leads a significant number of vaginal deliveries, she has gained substantial experience with this method and successfully applies it in every indicated case. As can be seen from the list of publications provided, her interest in the application of epidural analgesia has not ceased over time and continues to be demonstrated with relevant specificity and detail in some of her most recent scientific works.

Fetal medicine is a concept that has emerged in recent decades in modern Obstetrics. With the advancement of technology and the development of methods for precise diagnosis of the intrauterine state of the fetus, the presence of structural anomalies, fetal distress or other functional and pathological deviations from its normal development, opportunities for antenatal interventions to ensure a more favorable outcome are increasingly revealed. These effects include both the application of various medications and purely operative techniques in the field of the so-called "fetal surgery". In combination with the significantly advanced possibilities of modern intensive neonatological care, delivery in such cases often turns out to have a good outcome, even in significantly early pre-term pregnancy periods. This subspecialty of Obstetrics is developing at a rapid pace and requires constant updating of the available information, as well as familiarization with its details on behalf of every specialist in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

The knowledge and experience of Dr. Maria Atanasova in the field of fetal medicine is appropriately presented in the section: "Fetal medicine. Prenatal diagnosis. Possibility of prenatal treatment of the fetus" from the only original textbook on Neonatology published in Bulgarian.

Evaluation of the scientific activities

According to the attached list of participations in scientific congresses, conferences and symposia, it can be seen that Dr. Maria Atanasova participated actively and regularly with presentations at Bulgarian and foreign scientific forums. The main topics of her lectures are presented in the above-described fundamental areas in the field of Obstetrics.

Dr. Maria Atanasova participated as a researcher in two scientific projects, one of which was implemented: GRANT-2017 "Influence of the promoter polymorphism rs266729 on the transcriptional regulation of the adiponectin gene (ADIPOQ) in normal pregnancy and gestational diabetes." - contract No. 70/ 02.05.2017, MU – Sofia.

During the entire period of her professional development, Dr. Maria Atanasova attended and completed a number of qualification courses in the field of high-risk pregnancy, fetal medicine, ultrasound diagnostics in Obstetrics, labor management, specific surgical techniques, etc.

CONCLUSION

All procedures for the announcement of the competition and the admission of the candidate to participation in the competition have been followed.

From the presented facts, it is clear that the scientific creativity and academic commitment of Dr. Maria Atanasova meet, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the modern criteria for the academic title "Associate Professor" in terms of all the parameters laid down in ZRASRB and the Regulations for its application in Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL "Tokuda" Sofia.

The scientific metric indicators of Dr. Maria Atanasova correspond and exceed the minimum national criteria for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in the various sections, according to the score system created for this purpose and imposed for use in the field of higher education 7. "Health and sports", professional direction 7.1 "Medicine", according to ZRASRB and its regulations, as well as art.1 and art. 1a from the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff in Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL "Tokuda" Sofia.

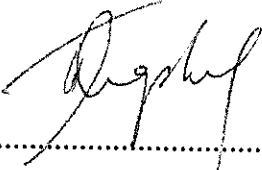
The scientific research and contributions of Dr. Maria Atanasova demonstrate her deep interests, theoretical knowledge and accumulated rich practical experience in some of the most important and fundamental areas in modern Obstetrics.

I give a positive vote in the current competition to the candidate: Dr. Maria Atanasova.

I recommend to the honorable members of the Scientific Jury to evaluate the overall scientific production and teaching activities of Dr. Maria Gicheva Atanasova-Elenkova as meeting our national criteria for quantity and quality and **to vote positively** for the acquisition of the academic title "Associate Professor" - for the needs of Obstetrics and

Gynecology Clinic at Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL "Tokuda" Sofia - in the field of higher education 7. "Health and sports", professional direction 7.1 "Medicine" and scientific specialty "Obstetrics and Gynecology".

20.02.2024

Reviewed by: 

/Assoc. prof. Dr. Petar Markov, MD/