

## **REVIEW**

**By Corresponding Member Prof. Dr. Ivo Spasov Petrov, MD, PhD  
Medical Director and Head of the Clinic of Cardiology and Angiology  
“Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Vitosha” Ltd.**

Appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury by Order No. 15-05-141 dated June 11, 2025, issued by the Executive Director and the Proxy of “Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda” AD, within the procedure for the academic position of **Professor** in Higher Education Field 7 (Healthcare and Sports), Professional Discipline 7.1 (Medicine), Scientific Specialty **Cardiology**, for the needs of the Cardiology Clinic at “Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda” AD, published in the State Gazette no. 31 on April 11, 2025.

**Sole candidate: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valeri Lyubenov Gelev, MD**

The procedure and preparation of this review have been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Bulgarian Law on Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), its implementing regulations, and the internal rules for academic staff development at “Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda” AD. I declare that I have no conflict of interest and have found no evidence of plagiarism.

### **I. Qualifications and Professional Career**

- **1990** – Graduated in Medicine from the Medical University of Sofia
- **1995** – Received specialization in Internal Medicine
- **2000** – Specialized in Cardiology
- **2003** – Certified in Interventional Cardiology (VSD)
- **2016** – Earned a Master's in Healthcare Management, Medical Faculty, MU Sofia, Bulgaria

### **Professional Experience:**

- 1990–1991 – General Practitioner in Kostenets
- 1991–2001 – Cardiologist, Cardiology Clinic, Pirogov UMBAL
- 2001–2009 – Invasive Cardiology Department, National Cardiology Hospital Sofia
- 2009–2013 – Head, Invasive Cardiology Department, Pirogov UMBAL
- March 2013–February 28, 2023 – Deputy Head, Cardiology Clinic, Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda AD
- Since March 1, 2023 – Head, Cardiology Clinic, Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda AD
- Since 2019 – Adjunct Lecturer, Medical Faculty, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (Medical Students)

Dr. Gelev has undertaken numerous additional training courses in interventional cardiology both in Bulgaria and abroad, including:

- ICPS, Massy–Paris, France
- Columbia University, New York, USA
- Scientific Institute of Cardio-Vascular Medicine, Novosibirsk, Russia

In **2021**, he earned his PhD with a dissertation titled: “*Retrograde Access in Recanalization of Chronic Total Occlusions of Coronary Arteries*”. Since 2021, he is Associate Professor of Cardiology at the Cardiology Clinic, Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda AD.

## II. Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment

Assoc. Prof. Gelev presents a total of **131 scientific works**, **130** of which are post-PhD:

- 1 doctoral dissertation
- 50 articles in peer-reviewed journals
- 1 book chapter
- 79 presentations at scientific forums

From these, **29 articles** are indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, **21** of which have an Impact Factor. Publications include prestigious cardiology journals like *European Heart Journal*, *NEJM*, *Lancet*, *EuroIntervention*, etc. He served as the Bulgarian reviewer for the ESC 2024 Guidelines on Chronic Coronary Syndrome. Additionally, 21 articles were published in indexed Bulgarian journals. He is first or last author in 55% of publications and second author in 2%. His scientific activity includes 79 roles as organizer, moderator, or presenter — 28 international and 51 national. He served as principal investigator in over 15 international clinical studies of novel therapies or devices.

According to the Central Medical Library, he has **10,288** total citations since earning his associate professorship: **1,871** in Scopus, **8,413** in Web of Knowledge, and **4** in Bulgarian library sources. The cumulative Impact Factor of his work stands at **616.438**, with an H-index of 11.

### Points comparison (presented vs. required)

Indicator Group	Content	Minimum Required Points by NACID for "Professor"	Presented Points by Assoc. Prof. V. Gelev, MD
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	—	—
C	Indicators 3 or 4	100	132.53
D	Sum of indicators from 5 to 9	200	238

<b>E</b>	Sum of indicators from 10 to 12	100	168,920
<b>F</b>	Sum of indicators from 13 to end	100	260
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>550</b>	<b>169,601.1 pts</b>

### III. Key Scientific Contributions

Dr. Gelev's research can be grouped into the following primary areas:

1. **Recanalization of Chronic Total Occlusions (CTO)**  
 – Pioneering Bulgaria's largest patient series analyzing retrograde CTO techniques.  
 – Introducing retrograde access methodology in cardiology practice.
2. **Percutaneous Treatment of Left Main Stenoses**  
 – First Bulgarian prospective study on long-term outcomes post-left main revascularization, applying latest ESC-recommended bifurcation techniques and stenting innovations.
3. **Complex Coronary Lesions**  
 – Introducing intravascular lithotripsy in Bulgaria for calcified lesions.
4. **INOCA (Ischemia with Non-Obstructive Coronary Arteries)**  
 – First invasive microcirculation evaluation system in Bulgaria, with results disseminated internationally and nationally.
5. **Lp(a) as a Cardiovascular Risk Factor**  
 – Studied nearly 2,000 patients, highlighting Lp(a) as an independent risk factor and treatment-guiding marker.
6. **Miscellaneous**  
 – Studies on heart rate variability pre- and post-revascularization, contrast-induced neurotoxicity after cerebral aneurysm interventions, heart failure with preserved ejection fraction, COVID-19 arrhythmias, and reviews on current cardiology pharmacotherapy.

These contributions have significantly advanced prevention, medical, and endovascular care for cardiovascular disease in Bulgaria.

### IV. Teaching and Educational Activities

From June 1, 2021 to December 31, 2024, Dr. Gelev accumulated **1,896.5 equivalent hours** at Tokuda Hospital, including specialist training in interventional cardiology and continuing education. As adjunct lecturer at Sofia University, he taught a total of **960 hours** to medical students across years III, IV, and VI, in both Bulgarian and English. He also supervises one doctoral candidate.

### V. Expert and Organizational Roles

Dr. Gelev is active in multiple national and international societies:

- Member and Board member (2020–2024) of the Bulgarian Cardiology Society
- ESC member
- European Bifurcation Club
- Chair (2015–2019), now Vice-Chair (since 2023) of the Bulgarian Society of Invasive Cardiology
- Director of the Bulgarian Bifurcation Course (2013–2025)
- Member of the Ministry of Health Expert Council for Cardiology
- Member of the editorial board of *Bulgarian Cardiology Journal*

### Conclusion & Recommendations

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valeri Lyubenov Gelev, MD, PhD, fully meets all requirements of the ZRASRB, its regulations, and the internal criteria of Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda AD for the position of **Professor of Cardiology**. His scientific, teaching, and expert contributions are outstanding in both scope and substance:

- 131 scientific works; 29 internationally indexed articles (21 with IF)
  - 10,000 citations; H-index = 11
- Over 15 international clinical trials
- ~2,800 teaching hours (1,896 hospital + 960 university)
- 79 scientific forum roles

### Recommendations for advancement:

1. Integrate research outcomes into hospital protocols, clinical algorithms, and standards—especially for CTO recanalization and intravascular lithotripsy.
2. Engage in drafting national/international clinical guidelines with Ministry of Health, Bulgarian Cardiology Society, or ESC.
3. Monitor patient outcomes more systematically (e.g., hospital stay durations, rehospitalizations, long-term survival post-intervention).
4. Develop a structured interventional cardiology training program, including simulation training and international certification.

In summary, based on robust scientometric data, notable academic and clinical achievements, and active leadership, I strongly recommend the Scientific Jury to vote in favor of promoting Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valeri Lyubenov Gelev to **Professor of Cardiology**.

Sofia, June 28, 2025

Prof. Dr. Ivo Spasov Petrov, MD, PhD

