

## **MILITARY MEDICAL ACADEMY**

Sofia 1606, 3 G. Sofiisky Str.

Republic of Bulgaria

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To

the Chairman of the Scientific Jury,

determined by order N 15-05-258#/15.12.2025

of the Executive Director and the Procurator of

"ACIBADEM CITY CLINIC TOKUDA HOSPITAL" EAD

## **R E V I E W**

by Prof. Dr. Krum Sotirov Katzarov, MD, PhD, D.Sc.

**Head of the Gastroenterology Clinic, Military Medical Academy - Sofia**

Regarding the competition for the academic position "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" in the field of higher education 7. Health and Sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine, professional field "Gastroenterology" for the needs of the Gastroenterology Clinic of "Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda" EAD.

The candidate for the academic position "Associate Professor" is Dr. Rozalina Ivanova Balabanska MD, PhD.

Dr. Rozalina Balabanska was born on 06.11.1963. She graduated from the Higher Medical Institute in Sofia, medicine, with honors in 1987.

**Career development:**

03.1991 - 09.1994 - Resident physician at the Gastroenterology Clinic of the Military Medical Academy, Sofia

09.1994 - 03.2007 - Resident physician at the Gastroenterology Department of the Fifth City Clinical Hospital, Sofia

03.2007 - to date, attending physician at the Gastroenterology Department, Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital EAD

09.2020 to date - Assistant, part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Sofia

11.02.2022 to date - Chief Assistant at the Gastroenterology Clinic, Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital EAD

**Acquired specialties:**

1. Internal Medicine -1996

2. Gastroenterology and Dietetics - 1999

In 2021, Dr. R. Balabanska was awarded the scientific and educational degree "Doctor", after successfully defending a dissertation on the topic "Liver Steatosis

and Non-Alcoholic Steatohepatitis - Clinical Evaluation and Application of Transient Elastography (Fibrosan)".

### **Specializations and scientific interests:**

Dr. R. Balabanska specialized in Gastroenterology and Abdominal and Endoscopic Ultrasound at the National Center for the Study and Treatment of Oncological Diseases in Milan, Italy. She has specializations in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Greece. Training in Hepatology and Transient Elastography at Vall D'Hebron Hospital, Barcelona. She holds a certificate for Abdominal Doppler Ultrasound - Level II since 2007 and a certificate for Interventional Ultrasound - Level III since 2009. In 2012, she joined an international Japanese-American phase 1 project for the treatment of liver fibrosis. Dr. Balabanska is a pioneer in the introduction of transient elastography in Bulgaria and an established national expert in the methodology. For over 20 years, she has worked as a principal investigator in international programs for the treatment of chronic viral hepatitis and cirrhosis, and for 10 years in programs for the treatment of metabolic-associated fatty liver disease. She participates in publications in author teams in Bulgarian and foreign journals such as Clinical and Molecular Hepatology, Lancet Infectious Diseases, New England Journal of Medicine, Hepatology, Journal of Hepatology, Cytokine, HIV Medicine, Gut, Digestion, Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology, Bulgarian Hepatogastroenterology, Modern Medicine, Diagnostic and Therapeutic Ultrasound, Medinfo, GP news, Medical Magazine. The candidate presents a dissertation for a Doctor of Medicine with an emphasis on the assessment of liver steatosis, metabolic-associated steatohepatitis and the place

of transient elastography (Fibroscan) in the diagnostic process. Valuable from a practical point of view is the proposed algorithm for assessing changes in the liver in metabolic syndrome, diabetes mellitus and obesity.

The monograph "Liver Steatosis" (2025) is a modern guide, examining modern concepts of etiopathogenesis, diagnosis and staging, treatment and prevention of metabolic and toxic associated liver diseases. Special attention is paid to the new terms and nomenclature in liver steatosis.

She is the author of "Guide for Prevention, Early Detection and Treatment of Colorectal Cancer".

She regularly participates in national and international congresses and conferences on Gastroenterology and Ultrasound Diagnostics. For over 10 years she has been awarded the title "Doctor whom Bulgarians trust".

For over 10 years she has been the head of the "Gastroenterology" column in the "Medical Store" magazine, as well as a member of the editorial board of the journal Medical Review - Gastroenterological Diseases. She regularly participates in national and international congresses and conferences on Gastroenterology and Ultrasound Diagnostics.

#### **Membership in scientific organizations:**

She is a member of the International and Bulgarian Association of Surgeons and Gastroenterologists

The European and World Association of Ultrasound in Medicine.

The Bulgarian Society of Gastroenterology

The Bulgarian Association of Ultrasound in Medicine

The European Association for the Study of the Liver

The American Association for the Study of the Liver

She speaks English, Russian and Italian.

### **Publications**

The candidate participated in the competition with 66 scientific papers.

Publications in foreign publications with an impact factor are 25 and without an impact factor – 3. Publications in Bulgarian scientific journals referenced in the National Reference List of NACID – 28, and non-referenced – 2.

Some of the publications are in authoritative international journals: Clinical and Molecular Hepatology, Lancet Infectious Diseases, Hepatology, Journal of Hepatology, New England Journal of Medicine, HIV Medicine, Journal of Crohns & Colitis.

The scientific articles and reports logically follow the scientific interests of the candidate and can be grouped into the following areas:

#### **I. Hepatology and metabolic diseases**

Cover a period of over twenty years and reflect the evolution of modern concepts of etiopathogenesis and therapeutic approaches in chronic viral hepatitis, decompensated liver diseases with an emphasis on their assessment and treatment – 22 publications. Eleven publications and the monograph “Liver steatosis” are dedicated to metabolic diseases of the liver with an emphasis on

the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of these pathological conditions. The in-depth analysis and published conclusions make them a valuable practical guide for specialists working with this pathology and establish Dr. Balabanska as a leading expert in the field of metabolic diseases of the liver.

Six publications are related to the diagnostic capabilities of ultrasound in gastroenterology and hepatology. Four of them focus on the capabilities of transient elastography in assessing the severity of liver fibrosis and steatosis. These are groundbreaking publications in which Dr. Balabanska analyzes the capabilities of the method, drawing on her own experience as one of the pioneers who introduced the methodology in Bulgaria.

II. Dr. R. Balabanska is a gastroenterologist with versatile interests, which is also reflected in her publications - chronic inflammatory and malignant diseases of GIT - 2 publications; so called rare diseases of GIT and liver - alpha-1-antitrypsin deficiency - 1 publication; Dubin-Johnson syndrome – 1 publication; transthyretin amyloidosis of GIT – 1 publication; Treatment of dependent patients with chronic viral hepatitis – 2 publications; anabolics and liver pathology – 2 publications.

According to the attached citation reference, the total number of citations according to Scopus is 635 and Web of Science is 625, some of them overlapping. A list of 11 Cyrillic citations, found in Bulgarian editions is also attached. The total impact factor of Dr. Balabanska is 679.596, and the individual one is 34.643; with H-index 6 (Web of Science) and 4 (Scopus).

eaching and learning activities

Dr. Balabanska is a qualified teacher, and her teaching and learning activities are expressed in:

- Training in "Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine" and "Internal Medicine - Gastroenterology" for 3rd and 4th year students at the Faculty of Medicine, Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski", Sofia
- Training of gastroenterology residents at Tokuda University Hospital
- Continuing medical education - courses in ultrasound and transient elastography

According to the submitted report for the period 01.01.2021 - 30.11.2025, Dr. Balabanska had a teaching workload with residents in the amount of 1152.5 equiv. hours.

**Compliance with the requirements for occupying the academic position  
"ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR"**

From the attached self-assessment report for the implementation of the minimum National indicators, it is clear that Dr. Rozalina Balabanska has a total of 10453.09 points, i.e. repeatedly exceeds the required minimum of 400 points.

Dr. Rozalina Balabanska is an established gastroenterologist with extensive theoretical training, excellent practical skills and an established place in the medical academic community. Bearing in mind the relevance of the presented scientific developments (publications, monograph, teaching aids), meeting the required scientometric indicators, the active teaching and learning activity, the previous performance in a professional and academic aspect, I consider that the candidate, based on the presented information from the attached documents,

meets the requirements of the RSARB and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of "Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda" EAD for occupying the academic position "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR".

**Conclusion:** I give my positive assessment and propose to the Honorable Jury to vote "FOR" Chief Assistant Dr. Rozalina Ivanova Balabanska, MD, to take up the academic position of "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" in the scientific specialty "Gastroenterology" for the needs of the Gastroenterology Clinic of "Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda" EAD.

10.01.2026

With respect: .....

City of Sofia

Prof. Dr. Krum Katzarov, MD, PhD, D.Sc.