

OPINION

By Prof. Anna Ivanova Kaneva-Nencheva, MD

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REGARDING: Procedure for filling the position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine, scientific specialty "Neonatology" for the needs of the Neonatology Department at "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital" EAD, with the sole candidate Dr. Radka Tsokova Maslarska, MD.

This opinion was prepared pursuant to Order No. 15-03-95#2/ April 16, 2026, pursuant to a decision of the Scientific Council (Minutes No. 64/March 18, 2026) regarding the appointment of a scientific jury to conduct this competition (State Gazette No. 18/February 17, 2026). This opinion has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law and the Regulations on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Regulations on the Development of Academic Staff at "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital" EAD. I have no conflict of interest regarding this competition. I found no omissions in the competition documentation.

SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Dr. Maslarska graduated from the Medical University of Pleven in 1986. She holds recognized specializations in Pediatrics (1992), Neonatology (2003), and Health Management (2017). In 2023, she received her Ph.D. after successfully defending her dissertation on "Hemangiomas in Infancy and Early Childhood—Innovative Treatment and Follow-up."

Dr. Maslarska's entire professional career has been dedicated to neonatology. She has worked in the neonatology departments of Lovech General Hospital, "Georgi Stranski" University Hospital in Pleven, "Ivan Mitev" University Hospital for Active Treatment, and the Second Municipality Hospital in Sofia. Since 2006, she has served as Head of the Neonatology Department at "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital," where she has introduced modern methods for diagnosing and providing intensive care to newborns, including preterm and extremely premature infants, as well as those with comorbidities and polymalformative syndromes. She is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Association (BMA), the Bulgarian Pediatric Association (BPA), the Neonatology Steering Committee, the Association of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, the Association for Premature Infants, and the Association for Children with Infantile Hemangioma. She serves as an expert to the Ministry of Health on newborn air transport, participates in the Expert Council on Vaccine Prophylaxis, and in the Consensus on the Treatment of Children with Infantile Hemangioma.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Dr. Radka Maslarska is participating in this competition with a total of 34 published research works, broken down as follows: 1 dissertation and its abstract; 16 articles published in world-renowned scientific databases, four of which are international, and 17 publications in non-peer-reviewed journals. Additionally, a list of 49 reports and scientific presentations delivered at scientific forums has been submitted, 12 of which were at international forums.

Dr. Maslarska is the sole or first author of 12 published articles, the second author of eight, and the third or subsequent author of the remaining 13. In the reports presented at national and international forums, she is the first or sole author in 22 of them. The submitted citation report lists eight citations of Dr. Maslarska's publications. A report from the Central Medical Library at MU-Sofia lists additional citations in Scopus and Web of Science, 967 and 949, respectively, for publications by research groups of which Dr. Radka Maslarska is a member. In the report provided, the total impact factor is 10.62 for Web of Science and 5.192 for Scopus (SGR). Dr. Maslarska's Hirsch index on her Scopus profile is 1.

Dr. Maslarska's scientific output meets and exceeds the minimum national requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science and of "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital" EAD

Dr. Maslarska's research interests lie primarily in the following areas:

- Infantile hemangioma – diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.
- Pulmonary ventilation, respiratory distress syndrome, and the use of exogenous surfactant.
- Enteral and parenteral nutrition of newborns and high-risk preterm infants.
- Ultrasound examination in neonatology—of the central nervous system, kidneys, and lungs.
- Neonatal infections and neonatal sepsis.
- Retinopathy of prematurity.
- Assisted reproductive technologies.
- Vaccination in preterm newborns.
- Emergency surgical conditions in preterm infants.
- Work organization and quality improvement in the neonatal intensive care unit.
- Clinical cases

CONTRIBUTIONS

I believe Dr. Maslarska's most significant contributions stem from her research on the diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of infantile hemangioma in infants and young children. She conducted the first systematic study of this condition in Bulgaria, analyzing disease types, identifying the causes of infantile hemangioma, and outlining the main principles for a clinical and therapeutic approach to disease progression. Contributions of practical significance include a thorough assessment of the efficacy of propranolol in treating infantile hemangioma, as well as specific proposals for improving the quality of and access to treatment for patients, which should be analyzed by health authorities for legislative action.

Scientific and practical contributions include the introduction and refinement of noninvasive methods of respiratory support for preterm newborns, aimed at minimizing damage to immature lung tissue, preserving spontaneous breathing, and improving synchronization between the ventilator and the patient. Contributions of clinical significance include the introduction of guidelines for feeding and nutrition in newborns and preterm infants, in accordance with the recommendations of the European Society for Paediatric Nutrition and Metabolism. Contributions of an applied nature include the use of ultrasound in diagnosing diseases of the nervous system, kidneys, lungs, and heart in newborns. A significant finding is that congenital heart defects are detected during preventive examinations in 3.5% of newborns, a frequency significantly higher than that reported in the literature, which serves as the basis for the inclusion of echocardiographic screening of newborns and infants in Bulgaria. Contributions of an applied nature also include the treatment of infections and septic conditions in newborns, emergency surgical conditions in the neonatal period, and vaccine prophylaxis in newborns. As head of the Neonatology Department, Dr. Maslarska has made significant contributions to the organization of work and the improvement of the quality of care in the neonatal intensive care unit through the application of new technological solutions: the introduction of a central monitoring station, a variety of noninvasive mechanical ventilation devices, central nervous system monitoring, and transcutaneous continuous noninvasive monitoring of partial pressure of carbon dioxide.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Dr. Maslarska is actively involved in training residents in neonatology. Over the past five years, she has delivered 1,858 hours of instruction, a significant contribution to the training of future specialists in this field. In addition, she has served as the supervisor for six neonatology residents, demonstrating her commitment and expertise in mentoring and the professional development of young physicians.

IN CONCLUSION


Dr. Radka Tsokova Maslarska is an established and recognized specialist in the field of neonatology, as well as a researcher and educator with diverse scientific interests and achievements. I believe that Dr. Radka Maslarska's overall scientific, practical,

organizational, and teaching activities fully meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the requirements of "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital" EAD regarding the conditions and procedures for holding the academic position of associate professor.

I will vote in favor and recommend that the esteemed members of the scientific jury vote in favor of awarding the academic position of "associate professor" to Dr. Radka Tsokova Maslarska, M.D., in the field of higher education 7. "Healthcare and Sports," professional field 7.1. "Medicine" in the scientific specialty "Neonatology" for the needs of the Department of Neonatology at "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital" EAD, Sofia.

May 13, 2026

Sofia

Sincerely: 
/Prof. A. Kaheva/