

## **OPINION**

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Regarding the competition for the academic position of “Professor” in the field of higher education 7. “Health and Sport”, professional field 7.1. “Medicine”, scientific specialty “Oncology”, for the needs of the Clinic of Medical Oncology at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital, Sofia.

### **I. Information about the procedure**

The competition for the academic position of “Professor” in the scientific specialty “Oncology”, for the needs of the Clinic of Medical Oncology at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital, was announced in State Gazette No. 12/11.02.2025. By Order No. 15-05-82/27.03.2025 of the Executive Director and the Procurator of the hospital, I was appointed as an internal member of the Scientific Jury. The decision of the first absentee meeting of the Jury was that I should prepare an opinion. All procedural requirements related to the announcement of the competition, the submission deadline, and the composition of the Scientific Jury have been observed. One candidate submitted documents: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jeli azko Iliev Arabadjiev, MD, who meets all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), its implementing regulations, and the internal rules of Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital.

Based on the materials submitted to me for the preparation of this opinion, I declare that I have not established any evidence of plagiarism and have no conflict of interest.

### **II. Professional background of the candidate**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jeli azko Arabadjiev, MD, graduated in Medicine in 1997 from the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov", Varna. He obtained his specialty in Medical Oncology in 2014 from the Medical University of Sofia. In 2012, he also earned a Master's degree in Health Management from the University of National and World Economy, Sofia. In 2020, he defended his dissertation and was awarded the educational and scientific degree "PhD" with a topic related to The predictive and prognostic value of tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes in breast cancer".

Between 2009 and 2013, he worked as a resident and later as an assistant at the University Hospital for Oncology, Sofia. From 2015 to 2017, he was employed at the Medical Oncology Clinic of Acibadem City Clinic Oncology Center, and since 2018, he has been the Head of the Medical Oncology Clinic at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital. Since October 2019, he has been a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases. In March 2021, he was appointed as Associate Professor in the scientific specialty "Oncology".

He has completed numerous qualification courses and training both in Bulgaria and abroad in the field of oncology. He also holds a certificate from Harvard Medical School in immuno-oncology. He speaks English, French, and Russian.

### **III. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and academic metrics**

Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev has submitted a **total of 68 scientific works**, 67 of which are after his habilitation. These include: 1 dissertation for the award of the "PhD" degree, 4 scientific manuals, 38 scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals (14 in referenced and indexed editions, of which 10 have Impact Factor), and 25 scientific reports and communications (9 at international and 16 at national scientific forums). He is the first or sole author in 26 (68.4%) of these publications.

According to the citation report from the Central Medical Library of the Medical University of Sofia, there are 163 documented citations: 52 in Scopus, 49 in Web of Science, and 62 from the Central Library's archive. The cumulative Impact Factor is 21.

Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev has participated in 4 scientific projects – 2 international and 2 national:

International:

- MDT Aid Program in Lung Cancer
- INTERACT EUROPE100 by the European Cancer Organization funded by the European Commission

National:

- "Study of autoantibodies potentially associated with immune-related adverse drug reactions in patients with non-small cell lung cancer undergoing immune checkpoint inhibitor therapy", Medical University – Sofia (2024)
- "Study on PIK3CA mutations in Bulgaria and scientific survey"

A comparison table shows the minimum required points and the points accumulated by the candidate according to national and institutional criteria for the academic position "Professor":

Group	Content	Minimum Required Points (NACID)	Points by Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	-	-
C	Indicators 3 or 4	100	113.61
D	Sum of Indicators 5 to 9	200	413.5
E	Sum of Indicators 10 to 12	100	1055
F	Sum of Indicators 13 and beyond	100	162.9
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>550</b>	<b>1795.01</b>

Based on the data presented, Assoc. Prof. Jeliazko Arabadjiev, MD, exceeds the minimum required threshold for the academic position of "Professor" in nearly all categories, with a total of 1795.01 points compared to the minimum required 550.

This gives me reason to state that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jeliazko Iliev Arabadjiev, MD, meets all mandatory scientometric criteria, and in most indicators significantly exceeds them, for holding the academic position of "PROFESSOR" in the scientific specialty "Oncology" for the needs of the Clinic of Medical Oncology of Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital, Sofia.

#### **IV. Main scientific contributions**

The scientific contributions of Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev are primarily related to the diagnostics and treatment of solid malignant tumors in adults. His research and applied contributions can be grouped into the following categories:

##### *1. Breast Cancer:*

- Predictive and prognostic value of tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs) in women with breast cancer;
- Frequency, role, and therapeutic strategies in metastatic breast cancer patients with PIK3CA gene mutations;
- New treatment options for HR+ HER2-negative breast cancer;
- Aspects of the epidemiology, diagnostics, and treatment of triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC).

## *2. Lung Cancer:*

- Synchronous occurrence of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) and lung adenocarcinoma;
- Personalized treatment of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) in modern medical oncology.

## *3. Immuno-oncology:*

- Immunological, neurosurgical, and oncological aspects of glioblastoma multiforme;
- The role of cell death in maintaining tissue homeostasis and its link to tumor biology.

## *4. Melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers:*

- New drugs for the treatment of melanoma and non-melanoma skin tumors;
- Significance of BRAF mutations and associated therapeutic options;
- Immunotherapeutic approaches: monotherapy vs. checkpoint inhibitor combinations.

## *5. Modern treatment of gastrointestinal malignancies:*

- Immunotherapy in hepatocellular carcinoma, GEJ cancer, and pancreatic cancer;
- Targeted therapy with entrectinib for tumors with NTRK fusions.

## *6. Urogenital system tumors:*

- Application of checkpoint inhibitors in renal cell carcinoma;
- Checkpoint inhibitor therapy in bladder cancer;
- Therapeutic approaches at different stages of prostate cancer.

## *7. Global perspectives in oncology and cancer care:*

- European priorities in cancer control;
- The role of clinical pharmacists in improving treatment adherence;
- Screening, diagnostics, and treatment of cancer patients in Bulgaria.

Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev has participated in the development of national medical standards for systemic drug treatment, evaluation of therapeutic response, and follow-up of solid tumors in adults, including an Immunotherapy Compendium and GRADE-based practical oncology guidelines. His work has contributed significantly to introducing novel therapeutic strategies and advancing medical oncology and immuno-oncology in Bulgaria.

## **V. Teaching and academic activity**

According to references from the Education Department at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital, during the period 01.01.2020 – 31.12.2024, Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev accumulated 1447 teaching hours with medical oncology residents. As per a report from the Faculty of Medicine at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski,” he has completed 564.5 teaching hours between 2020 and 2024, including lecture and non-lecture hours. He is the founder and director of the “Scientorium Juvenorum” – a summer school for

immunologists and oncologists held annually. Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev has also been a supervisor for four residents in medical oncology, two of whom have completed their training, as well as two doctoral students, one of whom has already defended successfully.

His teaching activities include organizing curricula for students and residents, lectures, seminars, and annual post-graduate training courses for physicians and medical professionals in the field of oncology. The teaching and research activities of Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev are well presented and diverse.

## **VI. Clinical and diagnostic activity**

His clinical and diagnostic work focuses on the treatment and management of solid tumors in adults, including personalized therapies with targeted agents and immunotherapy. He has led numerous global clinical trials as principal or sub-investigator in areas such as breast cancer, lung cancer, colorectal cancer, and ovarian cancer.

## **VII. Expert activity**

Since 2022, Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev has been a member of the Board of the Cancer Mission of the European Commission. He represents Bulgaria in the European Breast and Colorectal Cancer Initiative. He chairs the national examination board for the specialty "Medical Oncology" and is a member of the Expert Council on Medical Oncology to the Minister of Health. He has served on four doctoral thesis committees, participated three times in juries for the academic position "Chief Assistant Professor," twice for "Associate Professor," and once for "Professor." He has been a reviewer of two monographs and three research projects from MU-Varna, MU-Plovdiv, and MU-Pleven. He is Editor-in-Chief of the scientific journal "Immuno-Oncology" and a board member of Bulgarian journals "MedicPro" and "GP Medic," as well as the online platforms MedicalNews.bg and ZdravenNavigator.bg.

## **VIII. Membership in scientific organizations**

Assoc. Prof. Arabadjiev is Chairman of the Board of the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Immuno-Oncology and the Breast Cancer Research Institute. He is a member of several international organizations, including the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO), American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), and Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer (SITC).

### **Conclusion**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jeliazko Arabadjiev, MD, fully meets the requirements of the LDASRB, its implementing rules, and the internal rules of Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital for occupying the academic position "Professor." He is a well-established specialist in medical oncology with extensive clinical experience, rich and high-quality scientific production with practical relevance, and active educational involvement. As Head of the Medical Oncology Clinic, he also demonstrates strong leadership. He is recognized nationally and internationally as an oncology expert. Considering all of the above, I strongly recommend that the Honorable Scientific Jury vote in favor of awarding the academic position "Professor" to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jeliazko Arabadjiev, MD, in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sport," professional field 7.1. "Medicine," scientific specialty "Oncology" at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital.

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