

## **OPINION**

by Prof. Ivan Tomov Gruev, MD, PhD

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In connection with the competition for the academic position of "PROFESSOR" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1. MEDICINE, scientific specialty CARDIOLOGY, for the needs of the Department of Cardiology at "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital" JSC, announced in State Gazette No. 54 of July 4, 2025.

I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury by Order No. 15-05-215/03.09.2025 of the Executive Director of "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital" JSC. I was designated to prepare an opinion as an external member of the scientific jury. The sole candidate is Assoc. Prof. Vassil Borislavov Traykov, MD, PhD.

The candidate has provided all the required documentation in accordance with the established requirements. I declare that I have no conflict of interest with regard to the materials submitted for review, and I have found no evidence of plagiarism.

**Brief Biography:** Dr. Vassil Traykov graduated from the First English Language High School, and in 2000 he graduated in medicine at the Medical University of Sofia. He holds a specialty in Cardiology (2010, Hungary) and certificates in: Interventional Cardiac Electrophysiology (European Heart Rhythm Association – EHRA, 2011); "Cardiac Pacing – Basic and Expert Level" (Medical University – Sofia, 2013); "Invasive Electrophysiology – Basic and Expert Level" (Medical University – Sofia, 2014); and a Diploma of Advanced Studies in Cardiac Arrhythmia Management (EHRA, 2023). In 2016, he completed a master's degree in Health Management, and in 2021 obtained a PhD degree. In 2021, he was elected Associate Professor in Cardiology. He has completed international fellowships in electrophysiology and cardiac pacing.

**Professional career:** He began his professional career at the Department of Cardiology, National Cardiology Hospital, Sofia (2002–2014), including work in the Electrophysiology Laboratory. He has served as Head of the Department of Invasive Electrophysiology at the Department of Cardiology, "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital" JSC (from March

2011 to November 2012 and from April 2013 to the present). Between November 2012 and April 2013, he worked at Acibadem City Clinic Cardiovascular Center – Sofia.

**Positions held:** Member of the Bulgarian Society of Cardiology (BSC), President of the BSC (2022–2024). As such, he has a leading role in the development and promotion of the National Plan for Cardiovascular Health. Member of the Board of the Association of Cardiac Pacing and Electrophysiology in Bulgaria (ACEB), where he served as Chair for two terms (2016–2019 and 2019–2022).

**Scientific Activity:** A total of 87 scientific publications are presented in the competition dossier, of which 86 are post-Associate Professor: one PhD dissertation, 37 scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (26 of which are international with an impact factor), two monographs (one individual), and 47 congress presentations. The publications and conference participations are documented under sections No. 9 and No. 10 of the required competition materials.

Assoc. Prof. Traykov is the sole, first, or last author in 49% of his publications, reflecting active and independent participation. According to the Central Medical Library of MU Sofia, his total citations amount to 9,530 – of which 4,757 in Scopus, 4,739 in Web of Science, and 34 in Bulgarian sources. The total impact factor is  $IF = 272.54$ , of which  $IF = 187.98$  were accumulated after appointment as Associate Professor. His h-index is 21. The table compares the quantitative criteria — the minimum nationally required points, those of 'Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital,' and the points presented by the candidate

Group of indicators	Content	Minimum required points (NACID) for "Professor"	Points presented by Assoc. Prof. V. Traykov, PhD
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	-	-
C	Indicator 3 or 4	100	129,31
D	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	200	281,82
E	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	100	142,610

F	Sum of indicators 13 till the end	100	220
Total number of points		550	143291.13

The comparative assessment according to the normative criteria demonstrates that Assoc. Prof. Traykov not only meets but significantly exceeds the national requirements for the academic position of Professor.

**Main Scientific Contributions:** The scientific works of Dr. Traykov can be grouped into the following sections:

1. Investigation of atrial fibrillation mechanisms and catheter ablation as a therapeutic approach; co-author of the latest ESC Guidelines for the management of atrial fibrillation.
2. Catheter ablation for supraventricular tachycardias, atrial flutter, and vasovagal syncope.
3. Cardiac pacing and infections associated with cardiac implantable electronic devices.
4. Management of ventricular tachyarrhythmias and prevention of sudden cardiac death.
5. Development of recommendations, consensus and position documents from leading organizations (EHRA and EACVI), addressing key clinical aspects of cardiology and electrophysiology not detailed in existing guidelines.
6. National and international arrhythmia registries – publications on organization of arrhythmia care.
7. Cardiovascular disease prevention and promotion of heart health – National Plan for Cardiovascular Health.

The scientific output of Assoc. Prof. Traykov addresses a number of topics in the field of modern clinical and invasive electrophysiology, which are of original character and high value, defining significant theoretical and applied scientific contributions with both research and practical relevance.

**Teaching Activity:** Assoc. Prof. Traykov is actively engaged in teaching cardiology residents, interventional cardiology trainees, and CME courses for cardiologists and general practitioners at "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital." He is a lecturer at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," Faculty of Medicine – teaching students in Internal Medicine Propaedeutics (3rd year), Internal Medicine – Cardiology (4th and 6th year). His teaching load amounts to 3,792 hours between 2020 and 2024. He supervises one PhD student.

**Conclusion:**

In this competition, Assoc. Prof. Vassil Traykov, MD, PhD, presents himself as a well-established specialist with extensive clinical, research, and teaching experience. He holds a recognized specialty in Cardiology and certificates in Interventional Cardiac Electrophysiology (European Heart Rhythm Association – EHRA), "Cardiac Pacing – Basic and Expert Level" (Medical University – Sofia), "Invasive Electrophysiology – Basic and Expert Level" (Medical University – Sofia), and a Diploma of Advanced Studies in Cardiac Arrhythmia Management (European Heart Rhythm Association – EHRA).

Assoc. Prof. Traykov has a substantial body of scientific work. He is a member of the authorship group of the 2024 ESC Guidelines for the Management of Atrial Fibrillation. He is a leading expert in the field of electrophysiology and cardiac pacing, with particular expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of atrial fibrillation, as well as in the use of catheter ablation as a therapeutic approach for supraventricular tachycardias, atrial flutter, and vasovagal syncope. He is also an established lecturer in cardiology and in postgraduate and specialized training in electrophysiology and cardiac pacing.

Assoc. Prof. Traykov is a former President and an active member of the Bulgarian Society of Cardiology. His scientific output fully meets the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), its Implementing Regulations, and the internal rules of "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital" JSC for the conferral of the academic position of "Professor."

On these grounds, I propose that the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury vote positively and recommend that Assoc. Prof. Vassil Borislavov Traykov, MD, PhD, be appointed to the academic position of "Professor" in the scientific specialty of Cardiology, for the needs of the Department of Cardiology at "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital" JSC.

Sofia, September 28, 2025 Prof. Ivan Tomov Gruev, MD, PhD

