

To the Chair of the Scientific Jury,
appointed by order of
Rector of MU – Sofia

From prof. Ivan Olegovich Litvinenko, MD, Department of Pediatrics, Medical University - Sofia, Head of the Pediatric Neurology Clinic at SBALDB "prof. Ivan Mitev" – Sofia

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On your Protocol No. 1/ of 19.12.2022.

Attached I present:

S T A T E M E N T

Appointed member of the scientific jury by order № 19I843/30.11.2022 in accordance with art. 4, paragraph 2 and art. 29a of the Act on Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria; art.2, paragraph 2 and art. 62, paragraph 1 and 2 of the Implementing Regulations of the Act on Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB); art.61 of the The regulations for the development of the academic staff at "Ajibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda" EAD, decision of the The Scientific Council (protocol No. 44/24.11.2022) to announce a competition for the appointment of the academicians position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7 - "Health and Sport" in the professional field 7. 1 - "Medicine" and scientific specialty "Pediatrics" at the Department of Pediatrics of the "Ajibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda". The competition was announced in SG No. 82 of 14.10.2022.

Only one candidate participated in the competition - Dr. Kalin Yordanov Lisichki, Ph.

The reviewing of the materials submitted for the competition is based on the requirements of the Law on Academic Staff Development at "Ajibadem City Clinic, Tokuda University Hospital" EAD. All competition documents were submitted according to the requirements of the Regulations, well arranged, in excellent aesthetic appearance and supported by the necessary supporting material.

Brief biographical data and professional development. Dr. Kalin Lisicki was born on 11.10.1958. In 1984 he graduated from Medical University - Sofia. After successfully passing the examination in 1991 he acquired the specialty of Paediatrics and in 1997 - Paediatric Rheumatology. She started her career as a pediatrician in 1984-1987 in the Regional Hospital of the town of Sofia. In 1984-1987 she worked as a pediatrician in Dupnitsa. From 1987-2007 after a competition she was appointed as assistant, senior assistant, chief assistant at the University Children's Hospital, Clinic of Pediatric Rheumatology. From 2007-2013 she was a doctor at Tokuda Hospital, Clinic of Pediatrics. Since 2013. - Until now he is the Head of the Pediatrics Clinic, Tokuda University Hospital. In 2022, he was awarded the educational and scientific degree of "DOCTOR" in Pediatrics for his defended dissertation on "Macrophage activation syndrome in childhood - analysis of clinical and laboratory changes, evaluation of the diagnostic approach and therapeutic effectiveness". In 1997, he completed a two-month course in France under the TEMPUS programme. His special professional skills include joint ultrasonography and joint punctures. He is fluent in English and Russian.

Membership: 1. Bulgarian Pediatric Association; 2. Bulgarian Society of Rheumatology; 3. European League Against Rheumatism; 4. European Society for Pediatric Rheumatology; 5. European Society of Paediatric Rheumatology.

Research activities

In the present competition, Dr. Kalin Lisicki submitted research papers as follows:

1. **Total number of scientific works - 72**, in the form of 1 dissertation, 52 scientific publications and 19 scientific communications.
 2. **Publications beyond those for the PhD - 44 in total**, of which 31 are in journals refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information
 3. **Participation in the writing of textbooks - 4 chapters in total.** Dr. Lisicki contributed two independent chapters in Textbook for medical students "Pediatrics", edited by Dr. Lissis, edited by Dr. Bobev, E. 2. He is also the author of two independent chapters in Propedeutics of Pediatric Diseases, Textbook for medical students, postgraduate and doctoral students in pediatrics, general practitioners, edited by Assoc. П. Miteva-Shumnalieva, Assoc. Д. Avdjieva-Tzavella and prof. И. Litvinenko, Medikon Publishers, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2021, ISBN 978-619-91897-0-2
 4. **He has participated with scientific communications** in 19 scientific forums in Bulgaria and abroad outside the doctoral program.
- Dr. Lisicki is an independent author of 6 of the publications, first author of 16 of the scientific papers and second author of 9 publications.

Citations

According to the official reference from CMB, Dr. K. Scopus (Elsevier) - 15 and Web of Science (Clarivate). The calculated h-index is 2

Teaching workload:

According to the official report, Dr. Kalin Lisicki's teaching workload exceeds the norm many times - for the period 01.01.2018 - 30.11.2022 it amounts to 1520 hours only from the training of postgraduate students, and for the training of students as a lecturer at the Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski" for the period 2019 - 2022 it amounts to a total of 1495 hours.

Contributions that emerged after the review of the scientific production of Dr. Kalin Lisicki:

I. Macrophage Activation Syndrome

In the dissertation "Macrophage Activation Syndrome (MAS) in childhood - analysis of clinico-laboratory changes, evaluation of the diagnostic approach and therapeutic effectiveness", as well as in a number of articles (24, 26, 44), Dr. Lisicki examined and analyzed 20 children with MAS.

The contributions of these original works are: 1. For the first time in Bulgaria, data of patients diagnosed with SMA in childhood are described and summarized; 2. Data on age and sex distribution in the disease are presented and the provoking factors, clinical manifestations, laboratory changes and their significance in SMA are identified; 3. Changes in ferritin values in SMA and non-SMA patients are analyzed; 4. Therapeutic regimens used to treat macrophage activation syndrome in childhood and their effectiveness are compared.

Contributions of applied nature: 1. The use of the ferritin/SUE ratio is proposed as a rapid and effective method to differentiate SMA from non-SMA patients; 2. The effect of biological therapy with anti-IL-1 receptor antagonists is described and analyzed.

Contributions of confirmatory nature: 1. Changes in all laboratory parameters currently accepted by PRINTO/EULAR as diagnostic criteria for SMA are found; 2. Changes in LDH, D-dimer, total protein and albumin values, which are not diagnostic criteria but also have high diagnostic value in the context of SMA, are demonstrated.

Two cases of SMA that developed allergy to corticosteroids (CCs) during the course of treatment have also been described, and in the second case we had consistent allergic manifestations to different groups of CCs (25). Information about these conditions in the scientific literature is scarce, the relationship between the concepts of CS and allergy is counterintuitive, even seemingly paradoxical, and therefore physicians rarely think about them. Lisicki describes the most common clinical manifestations, the allergenic potential of different CSs depending on their molecular structure and route of administration, and an algorithm for the diagnosis and management of CS allergy.

II. Contributions in the field of Arthritis and Spondyloarthritis

The author participated in the first large study of antigens of the NLA system in children with juvenile chronic arthritis. The antigens of loci A, B and DR were studied in 148 Bulgarian children. It was found that the predisposing factors for the development of JuHi were the carriage of the NLA antigens DR4, B27, and (CREG - B7, B22, B40) and B18 (42).

Other research includes a study of 39 children with Reiter's syndrome (37) and 24 with isolated enthesopathy (17). The frequency of parameters such as gender, joint syndrome (monooligoarthritis - 72%, polyarthritis - 28%, sacroiliitis - 23%), enthesitis (30%), ocular involvement (87%), urethritis (64%) were analyzed. Enteric infection was present in 74% of patients and urogenital infection in 10%. The carriage of HLA B27 was 65%. No child was found to have IgM rheumatoid factor, antinuclear antibodies, or high antistreptolysin titer. Recommendations for surveillance for evolution to disease in the spondyloarthropathies group are given (37).

Several publications describe rare forms of arthritis for which there is scant information in the periodical press (12, 35, 15, 10).

Juvenile ankylosing spondyloarthritis (JAS) is a rare disease of childhood. Dr. Lisicki presents a literature review (13) and the first study in Bulgaria of 17 children with UC (14). The emphasis is that in children there is generally no spinal involvement, so the diagnosis is difficult and is based on other clinical symptoms. It is emphasized that because males comprise approximately half of the population, and HLA B27 carriage occurs in 9.2% of the population, these indicators are highly sensitive but poorly specific. In another paper, the carriage of NLA B27 and NLA B7 CREG antigens in children with JAS was investigated. The association between NLA B27 and JAS was found to be 83.3%, and increased to 91.7% when NLA B7 CREG was also studied. The recommendation for practice is that CREG antigen carriage can be used as an additional diagnostic criterion for JAS (18).

III. Contributions in the field of Systemic connective tissue diseases and vasculitis

Protein-losing enteropathy (PLE) is a rare and uncommon complication of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). A girl with generalized edema, hypoproteinemia, and hypoalbuminemia who did not have proteinuria is described. Fecal alpha 1-antitrypsin testing demonstrated the presence of PGE in SLE. Aggressive CS and cytostatic therapy improved the condition and led to remission (11).

Thyreostatics have been used since the 1940s and their side effects are well known. They are observed in 3-5% of those taking them. The most common are skin rashes, arthralgias, gastrointestinal disorders. Medication-induced lupus (MIL) is extremely rare. In Dr. Lisicki's publication, 2 girls with MIL were reported to be taking propicillin, resp. methizole. In both, the clinical picture included febrility, photosensitive rash, joint syndrome, and positive antihistone antibodies, with the latter having immunologic abnormalities characteristic of antiphospholipid syndrome (9).

Kawasaki disease (KD) is an acute febrile illness characterized by midcaliber vascular arteritis, with the coronary arteries most commonly affected. Dr. Lisicki's publications describe 2 cases of children younger than 3 months of age with BK (29). At this age, the incompetent forms predominate. Clinical manifestations, which are not diagnostic criteria, are noted, but may help to make the correct diagnosis in a timely manner. Another study describes a case of chronic arthritis in BC (11). Another article offers an analysis of coronary risk in BC. Fifty-two children with BC were followed (38).

Localized (12 children) and linear forms of scleroderma (10 children) are reviewed in 2 articles (34, 36). Complications of linear scleroderma were studied. The main recommendation for practice is that scleroderma is not just a dermatological problem and children should be referred to a rheumatologist promptly.

IV. Varia

Coronaviruses have long been known pathogens for both humans and animals. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed many challenges to physicians and health systems. In view of the dearth of information and the massive and unnecessary prescription of antibiotics, Dr. Lisicki suggests a therapeutic algorithm for the treatment of COVID-19 in childhood depending on the severity of the disease and the results of laboratory tests (8).

Vaccines are one of the great advances of modern medicine. Due to autoimmune pathogenesis and immunosuppressive therapy, children with rheumatic diseases (RD) have an increased risk of infections, higher morbidity and mortality. Effective yet safe vaccination is key. Dr. Lisicki has published guidelines for immunizations in children with RA (28). The efficacy and safety of vaccines and their immunogenicity in relation to ongoing treatment with CS and immunosuppressant, intake of disease-modifying agents, biologics, and intravenous immunoglobulins are reviewed. A separate section on vaccine safety in children with PH is developed, as well as the possibility of PH activation after immunization.

Acute muscle pain and difficulty walking are symptoms associated with both benign and severe degenerative diseases. This necessitates frequent unnecessary invasive investigations, which can be spared in children if the clinical picture of benign acute childhood myositis (CODM) is known. The most common cause is infection with the influenza virus. Two articles published for the first time in this country reported cases of DODM, the first with enteroviral etiology and extreme rhabdomyolysis (creatin kinase 183,000 U/l) (23), and the second demonstrated SARS COV 2 (30).

Clinico-diagnostic work: In his long years of practice as a pediatrician, pediatric rheumatologist and head of one of the leading pediatric clinics, Dr. Lisicki has had the opportunity to encounter a variety of general pediatric pathology and especially in the field of pediatric rheumatological diseases and their modern diagnosis and treatment, which is

reflected in his rich scientific production. Dr. K. Lisicki is distinguished by an extremely thorough diagnostic and therapeutic approach and excels in the clinical work and responsibilities of the Head of the Children's Clinic, demonstrates the ability to make independent and timely decisions, is proficient in the performance of basic procedures and manipulations.

Extensive practical and theoretical training over the years, allows him to successfully pass on the acquired knowledge and personal experience to future medics and young graduate students.

Dr. Lisicki is a deeply respected colleague with authority and clout in the pediatric community. I know well his qualities as a physician, scientist and teacher and give them extremely high praise.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Kalin Yordanov Lisichki fulfills the criteria and scientific-metric indicators defined in the Law and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and for Holding the Academic Position of "Docent" at "Ajibadem City Clinic, Tckuda University Hospital" EAD. He is one of the leading specialists in the field of pediatric rheumatology, with significant scientific and practical contributions and great teaching experience.

I propose the Honorable Scientific Jury to give a positive vote for the award of the scientific position of "DOCENT" to Dr. Kalin Yordanov Lisicki, PhD.

25.01.2023r.

Signature:

/ Prof. Ivan Litvinenko, PhD/

