

To the Scientific Secretary of
Acibadem City Clinic, Tokuda Hospital – Sofia

REVIEW

From

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Regarding

Procedure for holding the academic position of Associate Professor in 7. Healthcare and sports – higher education area, 7.1. Medicine – professional field; *Obstetrics and Gynecology speciality* opened for the Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinic at Acibadem City Clinic, Tokuda Hospital – Sofia, as published in the State Gazette, issue 82, according to a Scientific Council decision (decision protocol 43/29.09.2022).

Two applicants have submitted the required documentation on time for filling the academic position as per the current competition: Lachezar Stoyanov Tanchev, MD, PhD (candidate 1) and Maria Gicheva Atanasova-Elenkova, MD, PhD (candidate 2).

Applicant 1

Lachezar Stoyanov Tanchev, DM, PhD

1. Biographical and career profile of the applicant

Lachezar Tanchev was born in 1981, in Vratsa. He graduated from the Medical University of Sofia in 2006. From 2007 to 2009, he was a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Medical University of Pleven. His doctoral thesis on *Research on selected anatomical structures in the course of minimally invasive radical hysterectomy combined with pelvic lymph node dissection* earned him a doctoral (PhD) degree in 2012. After successfully

passing the exam, he obtained his Certificate of completion of special training in Obstetrics and Gynecology in 2011.

From 2009 to 2013, he held the position of Assistant Professor at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at MU-Pleven. In 2013 he was elected to fill the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor and continued teaching until 2017.

Since 2017 to date, Lachezar Tanchev has worked at the Department of General Gynecology, Pelvic Surgery and Obstetrics at Acibadem City Clinic, Tokuda Hospital – Sofia. In his professional career, he has advanced and upgraded his skills and qualifications by attending a number of training courses: in ultrasound and colposcopy – in Bulgaria; and many specialized trainings abroad – surgery in urogynaecology (Vienna, Dresden), laparoscopy, hysteroscopy, robotic surgery, including a Console Surgeon Certificate (Strasbourg, Istanbul). He is a member of the Bulgarian Society of Gynaecologic Oncology, the Bulgarian Association for Minimally Invasive and Robotic Surgery, the Bulgarian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the Society of European Robotic Gynaecological Surgery (SERGS), the Society of Eastern European Robotic Surgeons (SEERS). He is fluent in 5 languages (English, German, French, Spanish and Romanian). Dr. Tanchev's scientific and practical interests are in the fields of mini-invasive surgery, anatomy of the small pelvis, oncologic gynaecology, and urogynaecology.

2. Research output. Assessment of the specific indicators for holding the academic position of Associate Professor

Group A. Indicator 1–50 points (required 50 pts)

Group B Indicator 2

Group B Indicator 3

Indicator 4 – **189.5 points** (required **100 points**). According to this indicator, the applicant has presented 10 full-text papers in the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology published in the years when the journal was indexed and refereed. Dr. Tanchev is the single author of one paper, the first author – of 1, the second – of 2 and the third and next author – of 6 of these publications. The topics are diagnosis of cervical precancers, laparoscopic surgery, clinical cases and two reviews – on contraception and fibroid disease, respectively.

Group D (Indicators 5 – 9) – **788.9 points** (required **200 pts**)

Indicator 5

Indicator 6

Indicator 7 – 561.9 points. Thirty-three full-text publications in refereed and indexed journals have been presented. Of them, 22 are published in international journals, and 11 – are in Bulgarian. In 9 of them (nearly 1/3), the applicant is the first author.

Indicator 8 – 212 points. Nineteen of the presented papers are published in non-refereed journals. In 6 of them (1/3), Dr. Tanchev is the single (2) and first author (4).

Indicator 9 – 15 points. Co-authorship in 2 chapters of a collective monograph – as the 1st and 4th author, respectively.

Group D – **1020 points** (required **50 pts**)

Dr. Tanchev's research papers have been **cited in 119** publications: 22 in Bulgarian journals and 97 in international journals.

The applicant's total **IF** is 15.

General evaluation and quantitative analysis of Dr. Tanchev's publications not related to the acquisition of the academic position of Associate Professor

Total number of full-text papers – **53**. There are 15 publications in international journals; for 2 of them, he is the 1st author. There are 38 publications in Bulgarian journals, for 10 of which he is the 1st author.

Participation in scientific forums: **61**

Participation in forums with published collections and supplements: 27, of which 8 are international (5 are in refereed journals) and 19 in Bulgaria (8 of which are in refereed journals).

Participation in forums with no publications: 34

Participation in scientific projects: **3** (as a researcher in a scientific-research project at MU-Pleven; as an expert in a project for innovative and modern education at MU-Pleven; as a leading researcher

in the project *Center of Competence in the field of personalized medicine, 3D and telemedicine, robotic and minimally invasive surgery*.

Co-authorship in 2 chapters of a collective monograph, as 1st and 4th author, respectively.

3. Tutor academic performance

Lachezar Tanchev, MD, has a tutorial experience of 8 years (2009 – 2017) at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at MU-Pleven: for 4 years he was an Assistant Professor, and for the rest 4 years he was Chief Assistant Professor. During these years, he gave full-lecture courses on obstetrics and gynaecology to English-language medical students, led exercises and participated in examination committees for medical students, Bulgarian and English-language studies.

His teaching workload for the last 2016/2017 academic year alone was 496 hours. The same year, he was in charge of an ongoing student workshop in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

4. Diagnostic and therapeutic practice and administrative activity

Dr. Tanchev's practical work is mainly related to the surgical treatment of malignant and benign diseases of the female reproductive system employing the four main approaches (laparoscopic, robotic, vaginal and open). Since 2008, he has been part of the robotic surgery team led by Acad. Gr. Gorchev at Dr. Georgi Stranski University Hospital – Pleven. He is certified to work with the da Vinci robotic system – first as a patient-assistant and then as a console surgeon. He is certified to perform laparoscopic surgical interventions and hysteroscopic surgeries. He had been Head of the Department at the Gynaecologic Oncology Clinic at Dr. Georgi Stranski University Hospital – Pleven. He is a member of the Ethics Committee at Acibadem City Clinic, Tokuda Hospital – Sofia.

Applicant 2

Maria Gicheva Atanasova, DM, PhD

1. Biographical and career profile of the applicant

Maria Atanasova was born in 1980. In 2004, she graduated from the Medical University of Sofia with the Golden Hippocrates award. From 2005 to 2009, she was a resident physician at the Mother's Home Specialized Obstetrics & Gynecology Hospital – Sofia. In 2009, she successfully passed the exam for acquiring a Certificate of completion of special training in Obstetrics and

Gynecology. From 2010 to 2018, she was an Assistant Professor at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at MU-Sofia. Since 2018 to date, she has been part of the Department of General Gynecology, Pelvic Surgery and Obstetrics team at Acibadem City Clinic, Tokuda Hospital – Sofia. For the period 2018 – 2021, Maria Atanasova was an Assistant Professor at the HealthCare Department at the Faculty of Public Health, MU-Sofia. Her doctoral thesis on *Delivery with epidural analgesia management* earned her a doctoral (PhD) degree in 2014. The same year she acquired a Master's degree in Public Health Management. Dr. Atanasova's postgraduate qualifications include 20 training courses in the country and abroad, mainly in the field of maternal–fetal medicine and perinatal care. She is a co-founder and member of the Bulgarian Association for Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology; a member of the Bulgarian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She is fluent in English and Russian languages.

2. Research output. Assessment of the specific indicators for holding the academic position of Associate Professor

Group A. Indicator 1 – **50 points** (required **50 pts**)

Group B Indicator 2

Group B Indicator 3

Indicator 4 – **120 points** (required **100 pts**). Regarding this indicator, the applicant has presented 10 full-text papers in indexed science journals in operative obstetrics, perinatal medicine, pregnancy and diabetes.

Group D (Indicators 5 – 9) – **299.83 points** (required **200 pts**)

Indicator 5

Indicator 6

Indicator 7 – **186 points**. Eight full-text publications in refereed and indexed journals have been presented. Of them, 3 are published in international journals, and 5 – are in Bulgaria. In 5 of them, the applicant is the first author,

Indicator 8 – **113.83 points**. Twelve of the presented papers are published in non-refereed journals, 5 of which are not in the field of medicine. In 3 papers, Dr. Atanasova is the first author.

Group D – **315 points** (required **50 pts**)

The applicant has submitted 42 citations, mostly in international journals.

The applicant's total **IF** is 16.

General evaluation and quantitative analysis of Dr. Atanasova's publications not related to the acquisition of the academic position of Associate Professor

Total number of full-text papers – **30**. Dr. Atanasova is the first author of 8 papers, the second author – of 8, third and subsequent author – of 14 of them. Six of her papers are published in international journals, and 24 – are in Bulgarian journals.

Participation in scientific forums: **21**, of which 6 were abroad. In 12 of the presented papers, the applicant is the first author.

Participation in forums with published collections and supplements: 7, of which 3 are international and 4 in Bulgaria.

Participation in forums with no publications: **14**

Participation in scientific projects: **2**

The applicant co-authored a chapter in a Textbook of Neonatology.

The core scientific fields covered in Dr. Atanasova's research output are: high-risk pregnancy, operative obstetrics, labour analgesia, maternal–fetal medicine, diabetes mellitus and pregnancy, clinical experience with rare diagnoses. I accept the contributions highlighted by the applicant in the attached author's reference.

3. Tutor academic performance

Dr. Atanasova held the position of an Assistant Professor at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at MU-Sofia from 2010 to 2018. She led exercises in obstetrics and gynaecology for medical and dental students in Bulgarian- and English-language training and for intern physicians; additionally, she lectured a basic graduate course for special trainees. She participated in examination committees and led exercises for postgraduate qualification in ultrasound and high-risk pregnancy. From 2018 to 2021, she was an Assistant Professor at the HealthCare Department at the Faculty of Public Health, MU-Sofia. During this time, she led student exercises for midwives

and seminars for interns, participated in exam sessions, as well as in the revision of curricula and study materials. She was in charge of the specialized training of 3 specialists, two of whom have already acquired their Certificates of completion of special training in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Her teaching workload for the period 2015 – 2018 was 1269 hours; her average annual teaching workload for 2018 – 2021 was 195 hours. The attached reference makes it evident that for the period 2018 – 2022, she carried out a teaching workload with trainee-specialists (in equivalent hours) in the amount of 974 hours at Acıbadem City Clinic, Tokuda Hospital – Sofia.

4. Diagnostic and therapeutic practice and administrative activity

Dr. Atanasova's research interests and practical work are related to the problems of high-risk pregnancy, normal and operative obstetrics, including labour anaesthesia. Ultrasound diagnostics in obstetrics is a specific area of her expertise. She participated in the founding and development of the only National Public Stem Cell Bank in Bulgaria. She participates in the patient organizations "Diabetes and Pregnancy" and "One in Four".

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the two applicants' scientific research and teaching activities, I am convinced that both meet and even exceed the national criteria for holding the academic position of Associate Professor. The two applicants are established professionals and experts in various fields of the Obstetrics and Gynecology speciality, experienced tutors, presenters at numerous scientific forums and authors of scientific research output with high-profile contributions and significant scientometric indicators. Dr. Tanchev and Dr. Atanasova can hold this position with dignity and merit.

My vote in this competition for holding the academic position of Associate Professor goes to **Lachezar Stoyanov Tanchev, MD, PhD**. The grounds are as follows:

1. He has held the position of Chief Assistant Professor, and academic career development implies taking the academic position of Associate Professor.
2. He acquired his doctoral (PhD) degree in 2012, i.e. 2 years before Dr. Atanasova.

3. For 8 academic years, Dr. Tanchev led the entire lecture course on Obstetrics and Gynecology in English for English-language medical students.

4. He has mastered the entire range of methods for diagnosis and surgical treatment of diseases of the reproductive system, including highly specialized and high-tech methods such as laparoscopy and robotic surgery.

5. Dr. Tanchev's scientometric indicators exceed those of Dr. Atanasova: 53 full-text papers vs 30; 15 papers in international journals vs 6; 61 participations in scientific forums vs 21.

6. The quantitative criteria in the different groups of indicators for holding the academic position of Associate Professor of Dr. Tanchev exceed those of Dr. Atanasova: Indicator 4 – 189 points vs 120 points; Indicator 7 – 561.9 points vs 186 points; Indicator 8 – 212 points vs 113.8 pts; group D – 1020 points vs 315 pts.

7. Dr. Tanchev's research papers have been cited 119 times vs 42 citations of Dr. Atanasova's publications. This is a certificate of quality research and the journal's visibility in which it was published.

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Prof. Yavor Kornovski, MD, DSC

