

OPINION

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Regarding the competition for the academic position of "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional direction 7.1. MEDICINE, scientific specialty CARDIOLOGY for the needs of the Clinic of Cardiology at "Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda" EAD, announced in State Gazette issue 85 of October 14, 2025.

I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order No. 15-05-259/15.12.2025 of the Executive Director and the Procurator of "Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Tokuda" EAD. I have been designated to prepare an opinion as an internal member of the scientific jury.

The only candidate in the competition is Dr. Ivayla Zhivkova Zheleva – Kyuchukova, MD, PhD.

All necessary documents for fulfilling the conditions specified in the relevant laws (ZRASRB and PPZRASRB) and the internal regulations of "Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda" EAD have been provided to me. For the purposes of this procedure, Dr. Ivayla Zheleva has provided all mandatory documents, including lists of publications, participation in scientific forums, and reports on scientific-teaching activities and contributions. I declare that I have no conflict of interest with the candidate and have found no evidence of plagiarism.

1. Biographical Data

1.1. Education and Specializations

Dr. Ivayla Zheleva graduated from the "Romain Rolland" Foreign Language High School in Stara Zagora and completed her medical degree at Medical University-Sofia in 1999. She acquired a specialty in Internal Medicine in 2009 and in Cardiology in 2013. Dr. Zheleva holds certificates for highly specialized activities in "Invasive Cardiology" (2010) and "Echocardiography" (2021). In 2016, she completed a Master's degree in Health Management.

1.2. Professional Path

Dr. Zheleva began her career in 2001 at UNSBAL "St. Ekaterina". Since 2009, she has started working at UMBALSM "N.I. Pirogov", and since 2013 up to now, she has been working as an invasive cardiologist at "Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda". She has been a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" since the 2019/2020 academic year. In 2021, she has successfully defended her PhD thesis on "Interventional treatment in patients with left main stem stenosis and accompanying complex coronary pathology".

1.3. Positions Held

Dr. Zheleva is a member of Bulgarian Society of Cardiology (BSC), the European Society of Cardiology, the Bulgarian Society of Interventional Cardiology (BSIC), and the European Association of Percutaneous Cardiovascular Interventions (EAPCI). She served on the Executive Board of BSIC from 2015–2025 and in one of the terms she was a Secretary of BSIC.

2. Scientific Activity

Dr. Zheleva is applying with a total of 94 scientific works: 1 dissertation, 40 scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals, and 53 participations in scientific forums (Table 1). In scientific journals indexed in Scopus / Web of Science, 16 scientific articles have been published, of which 6 have an

impact factor, 23 are in Bulgarian journals from the National Reference List, and 1 is in an international non-indexed peer-reviewed journal.

The candidate is a sole, first, or second author in nearly 2/3 (62.5%) of the actual publications, which demonstrates active participation in all stages of scientific work.

According to the submitted reference from the Central Medical Library, Medical University – Sofia, Dr. Zheleva has a **total of 31 citations** (Scopus and Web of Knowledge – 7, Bulgarian sources – 18, other foreign sources – 6).

The **total impact factor** of the scientific works is **60.483**, and the **individual impact factor** is **22.7372**.

The scientific works presented by Dr. Zheleva meet the requirements for scientific activity for holding the academic position "Associate Professor", adopted by the Scientific Council of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD.

Table 1. Types of Scientific Works

Total Number	131
PhD Thesis	1
Publications in Bulgarian and International Journals	40
Publications in Bulgarian journals - NRL	23
Publications in Scopus/Web of Science (total number)	16
• with Impact Factor	6
• Total Impact Factor	60.483
Publications in international non-indexed peer-reviewed journals	1
• First author	11 of 40 (27.5%)
• Second author	14 of 40 (35%)
• Third and subsequent author	15 of 40 (37.5%)
Total number of citations	31

3. Contributions of the scientific work

The candidate demonstrates high and significant scientific contributions to cardiovascular medicine.

Several main scientific contributions can be identified in the work of Dr. Zheleva:

Contributions of scientific-theoretical and confirmatory nature

1. The applicability and effectiveness of percutaneous coronary intervention in patients with unprotected left main stenosis, including those with high anatomical complexity, under real-world clinical practice conditions, have been confirmed.

2. Clinical, anatomical, and procedural predictors of major adverse cardiovascular events after interventions on the left main coronary artery have been analyzed.
3. Data on optimal antithrombotic management in patients after PCI with a high bleeding risk have been enriched.

Contributions of scientific-practical nature

1. A registry-based approach has been introduced and analyzed for follow-up of patients with left main coronary disease treated interventionally in a Bulgarian center.
2. Practical algorithms for interventional management of complex coronary lesions have been proposed, including cases with SYNTAX Score ≥ 32 .
3. The scientific results have direct application in daily clinical practice of interventional cardiology and contribute to improving the selection and treatment of high-risk patients.

The scientific work of Dr. Ivayla Zheleva demonstrates a systematic approach, leading to valuable developments published in periodical journals and presented at national and international forums. Her participations in scientific forums complement her scientific output.

4. Teaching activity

The teaching workload of Dr. Zheleva is presented in a certificate issued by Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD. According to it, for the period 01.01.2021 – 31.11.2025, she delivered 1,289 equivalent hours of training of cardiology residents. According to a certificate from the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, from 2022 to 2025, she delivered 594 teaching hours of work with medical students. At the same time, she served as supervisor of the specialization of four residents in Cardiology.

The presented data clearly demonstrate the rich teaching experience of the candidate.

5. Scientometric Indicators

The scientometric indicators of Dr. Ivayla Zheleva-Kyuchukova correspond to the requirements set by the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD (Table 2). Under Indicator A, the candidate presents a defended dissertation, thus meeting the requirements for this indicator. Under Indicators B to D, the candidate significantly exceeds the minimum required points according to the criteria of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD. Dr. Zheleva has teaching activity as an adjunct lecturer of medical students in Bulgarian and English in Internal Medicine – Cardiology (3rd, 4th, and 6th year) at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, and is also a supervisor of the specialization of four residents.

Table 2. Comparison of quantitative criteria – minimum national required points and those of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD and the points presented by the candidate

Group of indicators	Content	Minimum required points (NACID & ACCT Tokuda) for "Associate Professor"	Points presented by Dr. I. Zheleva, PhD
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	–	–
C	Indicators 3 or 4	100	139.52
D	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	200	395.75
E	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	50	220
Total points		400	805.27

6. Conclusion

After a detailed review and familiarization with the submitted documents and materials related to the competition, I consider that they fully meet all requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff, its implementing regulations, and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD – Sofia. Dr. Ivayla Zheleva presents a sufficient number of publications and reports from international forums, significantly exceeding the minimum required number of points according to the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD and the requirements of NACID. Dr. Zheleva is a fully developed specialist with extensive clinical experience and significant scientific and applied scientific contributions, as well as substantial teaching experience.

Based on the above, I give a **positive evaluation** of the candidacy of Dr. Ivayla Zhivkova Zheleva, PhD, and strongly recommend that the honorable members of the Scientific Jury **vote in favor of her election** to the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of Higher Education 7. Healthcare and Sport, professional field 7.1. Medicine, scientific specialty "Cardiology", for the needs of the Cardiology Clinic of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD – Sofia, competition announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 85 of 14.10.2025.

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Sofia

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