

OPINION

**BY PROF. DR IVAN TOMOV GRUEV, MD, FESC
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL ACTIVITIES,
NMTB "TSAR BORIS III" - SOFIA**

Regarding the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine, scientific specialty "Cardiology" for the needs of the Cardiology Clinic of "Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda" EAD, announced in the State Gazette (No. 85 of 14.10.2025)

The only candidate is Dr Ivayla Zhivkova Zheleva-Kyuchukova, DM

In connection with the materials provided to me for evaluation, I declare that I have no conflict of interest and find no evidence of plagiarism.

Brief biographical information

Dr Zheleva has worked in prestigious university clinics such as UMHAT "St. Ekaterina," UMHATEM "Pirogov," and currently "Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda" EAD, and since October 2019 to the present, she has also been an honorary lecturer in Internal Medicine and Cardiology at the Faculty of Medicine at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," Sofia.

She holds the following diplomas and certificates:

No. 2443-63 – 22.06.1993 Secondary education diploma – Romen Rolland High School of Foreign Languages, Stara Zagora

No. 007987-16.11.1999 – Master's Degree in Medicine, Medical University, Sofia

No. 012634 – 15.07.2009 – Diploma in Internal Medicine, Medical University, Sofia

No. 0051 – 17.02.2010 – Certificate in Invasive Cardiology, Medical University of Sofia

No. 013747 – 22.02.2013 – Diploma in Cardiology, Medical University of Sofia

No. 037724 – 11.04.2016 – Master's Degree in Health Management, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University of Sofia

No. 0024 – 30.09.2021 – Doctoral degree in Cardiology

No. 4645 – 10.11.2021 – Certificate of competence "Echocardiography – fundamental level, transthoracic echocardiography (1P EchoCG, 2P EchoCG), conventional and colour Doppler," Medical University of Sofia

I. General information

Dr Zheleva participated in the competition with a total of 94 scientific works: 1 dissertation for the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor", 40 scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals, and 53 presentations at scientific forums. Sixteen scientific articles have been published in scientific journals indexed in Scopus/Web of Science, six of which have an IF, 23 in Bulgarian journals from the National Library of Science, and one in an international non-indexed peer-reviewed journal.

The candidate is the first author in 27.5% of the publications and the second author in 35%. The analysis of the author's participation shows that in almost two-thirds of publications, the candidate is the sole, first, or second author, indicating a leading role in scientific research. Scientific activity is represented by 53 scientific reports and communications, 15 of which have printed abstracts (5 at international and 10 at national scientific forums), and the candidate has been invited as a lecturer at 5 congresses.

II. Quantitative analysis of scientific output and author participation

She has published 16 scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals (in Scopus/Web of Science, of which 6 have IF; 23 in the National Reference List; and 1 in an international, non-indexed, peer-reviewed journal). Dr Zheleva has participated in 53 conferences. She has given 5 program lectures at international conferences and is the author and co-author of 15 scientific reports and communications with published abstracts (5 at international scientific forums and 10 at national scientific forums), which demonstrates stable and consistent scientific activity. (Table 2).

The candidate is the author and co-author of scientific publications in refereed and indexed international databases (Scopus and Web of Science), as well as in national peer-reviewed journals. He actively participates in international and national scientific congresses and has published abstracts in prestigious journals. Some publications have impact factors, with a total impact factor of 60.483 and an individual impact factor of 22.7372 (Table 3). According to the citation report provided by the Central Medical Library of MU Sofia, a total of 31 citations are documented in the databases, of which 7 are from foreign sources (Scopus /Web of Science). Citations in sources from the Central Medical Library's collection have been found – 18. h-index: Scopus – 2 and Web of Science – 1. The scientific works are cited in Bulgarian and foreign sources, including the Scopus and Web of Science databases, with a measurable h-index. The citations in Scopus, Web of Science, and Bulgarian sources, as well as the presence of an h-index, confirm the scientific visibility and recognition of the published results.

The data presented show that the candidate's scientific output and activity fully meet and exceed the minimum national requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor." (Table 4)

Table 4. Compliance with minimum national criteria (NACID)

Group of indicators	Contents	Minimum NACID points required for "Associate Professor"	Points presented by Dr. I. Zheleva
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

III. Analysis of the issues addressed in scientific papers

The dissertation is titled: "Interventional treatment in patients with left main stenosis and concomitant complex coronary pathology," developed at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital – Sofia, and is based on a prospective registry of patients with unprotected left main coronary artery stenosis treated with percutaneous coronary intervention. Publications on this topic occupy a leading place in the candidate's scientific activity. A significant contribution is the analysis of patients with high anatomical complexity (Syntax Score ≥ 32). The papers show that with an experienced interventional team and careful selection, PCI can also be applied to this group of patients, with acceptable early and medium-term clinical results. A significant part of the scientific activity is focused on medication behavior in patients after percutaneous coronary interventions, with an emphasis on antithrombotic therapy and bleeding risk management. These developments have a clear practical orientation and support clinical decision-making. Part of the scientific research is devoted to complications of interventional procedures – contrast-induced nephropathy, rare neurological complications. Interdisciplinary publications on radiation protection and dosimetry complement the scientific profile and demonstrate a commitment to the quality of medical care, both for patients and medical staff in invasive cardiology.

IV. Analysis of participation in scientific forums and scientific communication

Participation in national and international scientific forums occupies a significant place in Dr. Zheleva's scientific activity and represents an important component in the dissemination and validation of the scientific results presented in her publications. An analysis of these participations shows a consistent and long-term commitment to leading scientific events in the field of interventional cardiology, as well as a growing expert role over the years. In recent years, there has been a clear evolution in Dr. Zheleva's role at scientific forums – from active participant and presenter to lecturer, moderator, and panelist in specialized sessions, courses, and symposiums. The topics of the lectures and moderated sessions reflect the

leading trends in modern interventional cardiology – treatment of calcified coronary lesions, complex PCI, functional assessment of coronary microcirculation, ANOCA/INOCA, chronic total occlusions, and optimization of interventional results through imaging methods. In summary, Dr. Ivayla Zhivkova Zheleva-Kyuchukova's participation in scientific forums complements and builds on her published scientific output, providing broad professional visibility, international recognition, and a direct link between scientific research and clinical practice. They are an important argument for her academic maturity and active role in the development of interventional cardiology.

V. Teaching and lecturing activities

The Cardiology Clinic provides training in cardiology to medical residents, III, IV, V, VI year medical students, and nurses in specific areas. Dr. Zheleva's teaching load is well represented. In a certificate issued by ASC UMHAT Tokuda EAD for the period 01.01.2021-31.11.2025, she has completed a total of 1289 equivalent hours of training of specialists. and according to the certificate issued by the Medical Faculty of Sofia University, from 2022 to 2025 she has completed 600 equivalent hours of work with students.

VI. Analysis of editorial, peer review, and scientific-organizational activities

Reviewing is an important indicator of scientific expertise and recognition in the relevant scientific field. Dr. Zheleva's participation as a reviewer of scientific manuscripts for established peer-reviewed journals reflects the editorial boards' confidence in her professional competence and scientific judgment. During the period 2023–2024, the candidate participated as a peer reviewer of three scientific manuscripts in peer-reviewed scientific journals, including Bulgarian Cardiology and Pharmacia. The topics of the reviewed publications cover current and interdisciplinary issues in the field of cardiovascular medicine and pharmacology. This activity complements the published scientific output and participation in scientific forums, emphasizing the candidate's role not only as an author but also as an expert evaluator of scientific results.

In parallel with her reviewing activities, Dr. Zheleva-Kyuchukova has played an active role in the scientific and organizational life of the professional community for many years. For five consecutive terms (a total of ten years), she has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Society for Interventional Cardiology, serving as organizational and scientific secretary. In this role, she has been actively involved in the planning and implementation of national and international scientific forums, training courses, and professional initiatives, as well as in the coordination of scientific programs and interaction with lecturers, institutions, and partner organizations.

The combination of reviewing activities and long-term participation in the management and scientific-organizational structures of a specialized professional society complements the candidate's overall scientific profile and demonstrates her commitment not only as an author and researcher, but also as an expert, evaluator, and organizer of the scientific process. This

activity is an additional argument for Dr. Zheleva's academic maturity and active role in the development of interventional cardiology.

VII. Conclusion

The scientific works, publications, citations, and scientific contributions of Dr. Ivayla Zhivkova Zheleva-Kyuchukova, DM, fully meet the minimum national requirements, as well as those of the regulations of Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital EAD, for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine. The candidate has extensive practical, research, and teaching experience and contributions, which is why I give my positive vote and call on the members of the scientific jury to vote positively for the award of 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 Cardiology Clinic of "Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda" EAD, to Dr. Ivayla Zhivkova Zheleva-Kyuchukova, DM.

Sofia
09.01.2026

Prof. Dr. Ivan Tomov Gruev, DM

