

To Andrey Markov – Manager Director, ACIBADEM City Clinic

Mehmet Orkun Sarıbiyık – Procurator, ACIBADEM City Clinic

Concerning Order No. 11-07-75/28.05.2026

Review

From Prof. Dr Vasil Markov Bozhkov, MD, PhD, DSc

Head of the Department of Surgery, Medical University – Varna

Second Department of Surgery, St. Marina University Hospital, Varna

According to

Procedure for acquisition the academic degree „Associate Professor” in specialty of Surgery, Field of Higher Education 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.1. Medicine, Specialty Surgery, for the needs of the Department of Surgery.

Information Regarding the Procedure

Considering Order No. 11-07-75/28.05.2026 issued by Andrey Markov, Manager Director of ACIBADEM City Clinic, and Mehmet Orkun Sarıbiyık, Procurator of ACIBADEM City Clinic, based on Article 4, Paragraph 2 and Article 25, Paragraph 3 of the Academic Staff Development Law of the Republic of Bulgaria, Article 57, Paragraph 2 of its Implementing Regulations, Article 60, Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Regulations governing the award of scientific degrees and academic appointments at ACIBADEM City Clinic University Hospital, and pursuant to a decision of the Scientific Council of ACIBADEM City Clinic University Hospital, I was chosen for member of the Scientific Jury. By Protocol No. 1 from the Jury's first meeting, I was assigned to prepare this review.

Only one candidate has submitted documents for the competition: Dr. Ivo Petrov Zhivkov, MD, PhD

I received all materials required for preparing this review through the prescribed procedure.

This review has been prepared in accordance with the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Regulations, and the Regulations of ACIBADEM City Clinic University Hospital.

Professional Qualifications of the Candidate

2004 – Graduated from "Emanuil Ivanov" High School of Mathematics and Science, Kyustendil

2010 – Graduated in Medicine, Medical University – Sofia

2016 – Acquired specialty in General Surgery

2016 – Master's Degree in Health Management, Medical University – Sofia

2015–2017 – PhD candidate, Department of General and Operative Surgery, Medical University – Pleven

2017 – Successfully defended doctoral dissertation entitled: "The Role of Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Benign Extrahepatic Cholestasis" received the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD).

Postgraduate Training

2011 – Fundamentals of Laparoscopic Surgery, Sofia, Bulgaria

2012 – Transanal Endoscopic Microsurgery, Medical University – Pleven

2013 – Lower Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, Medical University – Varna

2013 – Upper Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, Medical University – Varna

2014 – Upper Gastrointestinal Laparoscopic Surgery, United Kingdom

2014 – Laparoscopic Liver Surgery, Sofia

2015 – Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy, Romania

2015 – Upper and Lower Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, Czech Republic

2015 – Lower Gastrointestinal Laparoscopic Surgery, United Kingdom

2016 – Laparoscopic Hernia Surgery, Serbia

2017 – Bariatric Surgery, Romania

2018 – Laparoscopic Liver Surgery, Israel

2019 – Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery, Slovenia

2022 – Liver and Pancreatic Surgery, Austria

2023 – Endoscopic Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), Germany

2025 – Component Separation Technique, Turkey

Professional Development

April 2025 – Present Head of the Department of Surgery, ACIBADEM City Clinic University Hospital

2023–2025 Adjunct Lecturer in Surgery, Medical College, Medical University – Sofia

October 2021 – April 2025 Deputy Head, Department of Endoscopic and General Surgery, St. John the Baptist University Hospital, Sofia

December 2018 – Present Consultant in Laparoscopic, Endoscopic and Minimally Invasive Surgery, Southwest Hospital

January 2022 – December 2024 Consultant in Laparoscopic, Endoscopic and Minimally Invasive Surgery, Medica University Hospital, Ruse

September 2023 – December 2024 Consultant in Laparoscopic Surgery, MedLine Hospital, Plovdiv

December 2016 – December 2018 Staff Surgeon, Department of Endoscopic and General Surgery, St. John the Baptist University Hospital, Sofia

December 2011 – December 2016 Surgical Resident, Department of Endoscopic and General Surgery, St. John the Baptist University Hospital, Sofia

2011–2014 Secretary of the Local Ethics Committee

Membership: Professional Memberships in European Association of Endoscopic Surgery (EAES), European Society of Surgical Oncology (ESSO), Bulgarian Surgical Society.

Scientific Output Submitted for the Competition

Dr. Zhivkov has submitted: One (1) monograph, Forty-one (41) peer-reviewed scientific publications published in Bulgarian and international journals and conference proceedings, distributed as follows: Sole author: 2; First author: 17; Second author: 17; Third or subsequent author: 10; Two published chapters in a collective monograph.

Scientific Contributions

For this competition, Dr. Zhivkov presents 41 scientific publications, fulfilling the minimum national requirements for appointment as Associate Professor, together with the monography: "Technical Aspects of Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration" for which receives 100 points under Indicator B3.

Thirteen publications (39%) are indexed in international scientific databases (Indicators B4.1–B4.13), corresponding to 178 points, exceeding the required minimum of 80 points for clinical disciplines.

Twenty-six publications appear in peer-reviewed scientific journals (Indicators G8.1–G8.26), corresponding to 264 points, exceeding the mandatory minimum of 200 points.

Under Indicators D10–D12, the candidate presents 9 citations, totaling 80 points.

Dr. Zhivkov has an individual cumulative Impact Factor of 38.416 based on thirteen publications.

Main Scientific Areas

The scientific work of Dr. Zhivkov has a strong applied clinical orientation. His research can be divided into several principal areas.

1. Monography (Indicator B3)

The monography "Technical Aspects of Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration" addresses one of the most current challenges in biliary surgery. It is exceptionally well written and includes the following chapters: Introduction, History, Surgical Anatomy, Diagnosis, Intraoperative Cholangiography, Choledochoscopy, Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration, Cannulation of the Cystic Duct and References. The monograph comprehensively summarizes current laparoscopic techniques and is valuable both for surgical residents and young surgeons, as well as experienced biliary surgeons working in specialized centers.

2. Laparoscopic Surgery

Laparoscopic Treatment of Cases of Unrecognized Common Bile Duct Stones – Our Experience. (B4-3)

Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration vs. ERCP in Patients with Choledocholithiasis and Acute Cholecystitis. (B4-4)

Dissection and Exposure of the Cystic Duct and Common Bile Duct – Is It Important for the Success of LCBDE? (B4-5)

Adjusted Enhanced Recovery Program after Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration. (B4-6)

Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding – Do the Complications exceed the Benefits? (B4-12)

Sequential versus Simultaneous Training in Conventional and Laparoscopic Surgery. (G8-4)

Emergency Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy in Patients with Decompensated Liver Cirrhosis: Risks and Benefits. (G8-5)

Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration in Patients with Benign Extrahepatic Cholestasis: Technical Aspects. (G8-9)

Strategies for Preventing Complications during Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy: Our Experience. (G8-12)

Laparoscopic Management of Biliodigestive Fistulas: Analysis of Four Cases. (G8-14)

Techniques for the Extraction of Common Bile Duct Stones in Choledocholithiasis. (G8-15)

These publications reflect Dr. Zhivkov's extensive clinical experience and sustained scientific interest in the management of complications of gallstone disease and their laparoscopic treatment. His long-standing expertise in this field has clearly provided the foundation for the preparation of his monograph on laparoscopic common bile duct exploration.

TEM in T1 Rectal Cancer – Influence of Cancer Grade. (B4-1)
Rectal Prolapse – Laparoscopic versus Conventional Treatment. (B4-2)
Laparoscopic Adjustable Gastric Banding – Do the Complications Outweigh the Benefits? (B4-12)
Laparoscopic versus Open Surgical Techniques for Complete Rectal Prolapse: Advantages and Disadvantages. (G8-8)
Advantages of Laparoscopic Appendectomy. (G8-11)
The Role and Complexity of Laparoscopic Techniques in the Treatment of Achalasia. (G8-18)
Lymph Node Dissection during Laparoscopic Gastrectomy for Gastric Cancer: Our Experience. (G8-19)
Advantages of the DIAMOND Technique in the Laparoscopic Management of Colorectal Liver Metastases. (G8-20)
The Role of Laparoscopic Surgery in the Management of Acute Pancreatitis. (G8-21)
Advantages and Limitations of Laparoscopic Hernia Repair Using PROGRIP™ Mesh. (G8-22)
Selection of the Optimal Fundoplication Technique for the Surgical Treatment of Hiatal Hernia and Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease. (G8-25)
Complications Associated with Laparoscopic Surgical Treatment of Hiatal Hernia. (G8-26)

Dr. Zhivkov's scientific interests are not confined to laparoscopic surgery of the biliary tract. They have progressively expanded to encompass minimally invasive surgery of the upper gastrointestinal tract, including the oesophagus and stomach, as well as colorectal surgery, reflecting the breadth of his expertise and continuing professional development.

3. Enhanced Recovery and Bariatric Surgery

Additional publications address:

Is enhanced recovery program after surgery applicable in the clinical practice in Eastern Europe. B4 - 7
Nursing care in the use of eras program in patients with morbid obesity. B4-8
Patient role and motivation in enhanced recovery program implementation. B4-9
Specific of nurse care in patients with morbid obesity. B4-10
Surgical Management of Morbid Obesity: Operative Strategy and Technique. (G8-10)

These studies demonstrate Dr. Zhivkov's interest in modern perioperative care and postoperative recovery.

Teaching Activities

Between 2023 and 2025, Dr. Zhivkov served as an adjunct lecturer in Surgery at the Medical College of the Medical University – Sofia. He delivered lectures, practical training, and examinations in Surgery and Pre-hospital Emergency Care for students in Radiography, Public Health Inspection, Medical Laboratory Science and Rehabilitation. Total teaching workload :130 hours of lectures; 165 hours of practical sessions; 57.42 hours of examinations. Total: 352.42 academic hours.

Clinical Practice

Dr. Zhivkov has 15 years of professional surgical experience. His career began in 2011 at the Department of Endoscopic and General Surgery. Since 2018, he has served as a consultant in laparoscopic surgery at several hospitals, including Southwest Hospital, Medica University Hospital (Ruse), and MedLine Hospital (Plovdiv).

Conclusion

Dr. Ivo Petrov Zhivkov, MD, PhD, is an established surgeon and educator with extensive experience in both elective and emergency surgery. His scientific work presents significant practical and academic contributions based on many years of personal clinical experience, refined surgical techniques, and the development of therapeutic algorithms.

His professional career, scientific achievements, clinical practice, and teaching activities fully satisfy the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act, its Implementing Regulations, and the Regulations of ACIBADEM City Clinic University Hospital.

Therefore, I give my unequivocal positive assessment and respectfully recommend that the Scientific Jury award Dr. Ivo Petrov Zhivkov, MD, PhD the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific specialty of General Surgery (Code 03.01.37).

07.07.2026

Prepared by:



Prof. Vasil Markov Bozhkov, MD, PhD, DSc