

OPINION

regarding the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific specialty Surgery, within Field of Higher Education 7. Health Care and Sports, Professional Field 7.1. Medicine, for the needs of the Department of Surgery at Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital

Prepared by:

Prof. Assen Dudov, MD, PhD

Chairman of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order No. 11-07-75/28.05.2026 of the Executive Director of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital

Candidate:

Dr. Ivo Petrov Zhivkov, MD, PhD

I. Eligibility of the Candidate

Having reviewed the documentation submitted for the competition, I have established that the procedure has been conducted in compliance with the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Regulations, and the Regulations on the Terms and Conditions for the Acquisition of Academic Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital.

The documentation submitted by the candidate is complete and fully compliant with the applicable regulatory requirements. Evidence has been provided regarding the candidate's acquired educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD), medical specialty qualification, scientific publications, citations, and teaching activities, all of which meet the requirements for participation in the procedure for the academic position of Associate Professor.

I therefore consider the application of Dr. Ivo Petrov Zhivkov, MD, PhD to be admissible and eligible for substantive evaluation.

II. Biographical Information and Professional Development

Dr. Ivo Petrov Zhivkov graduated in Medicine from the Medical University of Sofia in 2010.

In 2016, he obtained the specialty qualification in General Surgery and, during the same year, completed a Master's degree programme in Health Management.

In 2017, he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation entitled:

The Place and Role of Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Benign Extrahepatic Cholestasis

and was awarded the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD).

The candidate's professional development has followed a consistent trajectory entirely focused on contemporary surgical practice, with particular interests in laparoscopic surgery, minimally invasive surgery, hepatobiliary surgery, and bariatric surgery.

Throughout his clinical career, Dr. Zhivkov has held leadership positions and served as a consultant at several healthcare institutions, which is indicative of his high professional standing and recognized expertise.

Particularly noteworthy is his extensive postgraduate training. He has completed numerous specialized courses and professional training programs in Bulgaria and abroad, including advanced education in laparoscopic hepatobiliary surgery, bariatric surgery, transanal endoscopic microsurgery, upper and lower gastrointestinal surgery, endoscopic cholangiopancreatography, and abdominal wall

reconstructive surgery.

Taken together, these achievements outline a candidate with a clearly defined professional commitment to highly specialized surgical practice and continuous professional development.

III. Research Activity and Scientometric Indicators

For participation in the present competition, the candidate has submitted a habilitation monograph, a doctoral dissertation, publications in national and international scientific journals, presentations at scientific forums, and contributions to conference proceedings and collective monographs.

His scientific output comprises more than 40 scientific publications and scholarly contributions.

The submitted evidence demonstrates fulfillment and, in several categories, substantial exceedance of the national minimum requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor:

Indicator Group	Required Points	Candidate's Points
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A	50	50
B	100	100
G	200	308.5
D	50	80

The candidate not only satisfies the formal requirements but significantly exceeds the required threshold in Groups G and D.

His publication activity is mainly focused on topics related to contemporary laparoscopic techniques, biliary surgery, bariatric surgery, the treatment of patients with obesity, and the application of minimally invasive approaches in a broad range of surgical diseases.

The documented citations demonstrate scientific interest in the candidates work and confirm the visibility and recognition of his research contributions within the professional and academic community.

IV. Habilitation Thesis

The principal habilitation work submitted for the competition is the monograph entitled:

Technical Aspects of Laparoscopic Common Bile Duct Exploration

This monograph addresses one of the most complex and highly specialized domains of modern minimally invasive surgery.

The work focuses on the diagnostic and therapeutic applications of laparoscopic common bile duct exploration, providing a comprehensive analysis of different technical approaches, indications, limitations, and practical outcomes associated with their implementation.

Of particular value is the systematic presentation of operative techniques and management algorithms for diseases of the biliary system. The author demonstrates profound theoretical knowledge combined with substantial personal clinical experience.

The monograph possesses a clear scientific and practical orientation and may serve as a valuable resource both for surgical residents and for practicing surgeons involved in hepatobiliary surgery.

V. Main Scientific Contributions

The candidates scientific output allows several principal areas of contribution to be identified.

Biliary Surgery

This represents the most extensively developed field within the candidate's research portfolio. His work is focused on the diagnosis and surgical treatment of biliary tract diseases through contemporary laparoscopic techniques.

Minimally Invasive and Laparoscopic Surgery

The candidate demonstrates a sustained interest in the implementation, development, and refinement of minimally invasive approaches across a broad spectrum of surgical conditions.

Bariatric Surgery

His publications and scientific communications reflect active involvement in the surgical treatment of obesity and in the multidisciplinary management of patients with severe obesity.

Transanal Endoscopic Microsurgery (TEM)

The submitted research includes studies concerning the application of TEM in the treatment of early-stage rectal carcinoma and other rectal pathologies.

The overall body of work demonstrates a consistent commitment to the introduction of modern surgical technologies and to the pursuit of optimal solutions in complex clinical scenarios.

VI. Teaching and Educational Activity

Dr. Zhivkov has also been actively involved in academic teaching as a part-time lecturer at the Medical College of the Medical University of Sofia.

During the period 2023-2025, he delivered more than 350 academic hours of teaching activities, including lectures, practical sessions, and participation in examination committees.

This educational engagement demonstrates his commitment to the training of future healthcare professionals and his ability to effectively transfer professional knowledge and practical skills.

Conclusion

Based on the submitted documentation, scientometric indicators, scientific output, habilitation thesis, teaching activities, and clinical achievements, I conclude that Dr. Ivo Petrov Zhivkov, MD, PhD fully satisfies the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the internal regulations of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific specialty of Surgery.

The candidate is an established surgeon with proven professional competence, extensive experience in laparoscopic and minimally invasive surgery, substantial scientific productivity, and active involvement in academic teaching.

I give my positive evaluation of the candidate and strongly recommend that the Distinguished Scientific Jury propose the election of Dr. Ivo Petrov Zhivkov, MD, PhD to the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific specialty of Surgery.

Date: 15 July 2026

Chairman of the Scientific Jury

Prof. Assen Dudov, MD, PhD