

REVIEW

From: Prof. Dr. Irena Dimitrova Kostadinova, PhD MD

Clinic of Nuclear Medicine of Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL, Member of the Scientific Jury for: Competition for an academic position “Professor” in the field: Higher Education 7. Healthcare and Sport and in the professional field 7.1. Medicine and scientific specialty “Gastroenterology” for the needs of the Gastroenterology Department of Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL Mladost, announced in the State Gazette, issue 6 from 28.03.2021.

Regarding: The application of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stoyan Handzhiev, PhD MD, Head Clinic of Gastroenterology, Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL

1. Professional Development

Assoc. Prof. Handzhiev graduated from the English Language High School in Burgas, and he graduated with medicine from the Medical Academy in Sofia in 1978. The same year he started an Internship in Internal Diseases in the Higher Military Medical Institute in Sofia, then he was a Clinical Ordinator in Internal Diseases, Assistant, Head Assistant, Chief Assistant in the Clinic of Gastroenterology and Hematology in the Military Medical Academy, head of Department in the Clinic of Gastroenterology, and since 2016 – Head of the Clinic of Gastroenterology in Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL.

Assoc. Prof. Handzhiev has three degrees – Internal Diseases /1987/, Military Field Therapy /1988/, and Gastroenterology and Dietetics /1988/. In 2013, he defended a Dissertation on “Diagnostic and Therapeutic percutaneous procedures upon some diseases of the abdominal and retroperitoneal organs of the gastrointestinal tract”, and in 2015, he received the academic position Associate Professor.

As an expert and specialist, he participates in Committees and courses for percutaneous and interventional procedures under ultrasound or X-ray control in

the diagnostics and therapy, which are also his main scientific and professional interest. He participates in the introduction, for the first time in Bulgaria, of the peritoneal reinfusion of ascitic fluid in refractory ascites, resistant to treatment. He introduced in clinical practice the intraductal contrast-enhanced percutaneous cholangiography for patients with counter-indications for performance of X-ray assisted procedures.

The Candidate has participated in national courses and has specialized in many leading centers for his specialty in Germany, France, Austria, Holland and Denmark. He is one of the Bulgaria's leading specialists in the problems of upper and lower endoscopy, conventional and Doppler abdominal ultrasound, interventional percutaneous procedures under ultrasound and X-ray control, and a licensed expert in high-frequency thermal ablation.

Assoc. Prof. Handzhiev is a member of all Bulgarian organizations in Gastroenterology and Ultrasound Diagnostics, as well as of the leading European associations for the problems of abdominal ultrasound and liver.

2. Science and Research Activities

After receiving the academic position Associate Professor, he has a total of 45 scientific publications and announcements, out of which – 1 Monograph on an issue, elaborated in detail for the first time in Bulgaria – Locoregional Therapies upon metastatic tumors of the liver.

It has been illustrated with many valuable practical examples from the medical practice, and it is a wonderful summarization of the big practical and scientific experience of Assoc. Prof. Handzhiev, an excellent handbook for postgraduate doctors in Internal Diseases, Gastroenterology, Oncology, Surgery, Medical Radiology and Imaging Diagnostics.

The candidate has a total of 40 participations in Bulgarian and International congresses, conferences and symposia, and is a first author in a total of 62% of them. In his overall scientific activities, he has 10 published articles as a co-author in prestigious European periodicals with a very high total impact factor of 108.524. The Scopus base indicates 131 citations.

the liver, pancreas, abdominal cavity and retroperitoneum; transhepatic – upon cholestasis; procedures for draining abscesses and hematomas, cholestasis, biloma.

- The author introduces the intraductal percutaneous contrast-enhanced ultrasound as an alternative to the harder to perform, radiation loaded and more expensive CT cholangiography with confirmation its sensitivity and specificity.
 - For the first time in Bulgaria, with a contribution to the European Practice, he introduced the application of the hybrid imaging method of PET/CT as the most accurate and specific for monitoring the therapeutic effect following radiofrequency ablation of liver metastases, with early relapse detection and possibility for application of further individualized therapy.
2. Over a large number of patients, the latest locoregional therapies /LRT/ are applied for primary and metastatic liver tumors, with excellent treatment results, relative to the leading European practices.
- The team of specialists, led by Assoc. Prof. Handzhiev, has big experience in Bulgaria in their application – 9 different types in total, the most commonly used being RFA, MWA, PEI and TACE, depending on the number of lesions, the size of the tumor and the outcome of the imaging diagnostic methods used – Ultrasound /including contrast-enhanced/, MRI, CT, PET/CT, with the final therapeutic aim – achievement of tumor necrosis. After taking into account the Tumor Board decision for combined LRT with chemotherapy, the aim is reduction in number and size of the metastases.

practice, based on the big accumulated own experience and after a thorough analysis, the possibilities, limitations, survival rate results and possible complications after LRT after performance of liver biopsy and decision of the tumor board, are presented.

3. Teaching and Lecturing activities

During the past 5 years, Assoc. Prof. Handzhiev has led 348 hours of exercises in propaedeutic of Internal Diseases and in Gastroenterology with Bulgarian and foreign III and IV year Medicine students from the Sofia University. He is leading the specialization of five post-graduate doctors. Under his supervision, two Dissertations for receiving the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” have been defended – Dr. Ani Chavoushian, on the subject – “Diverticulosis and diverticulosis disease of the colon with pathogenetic mechanisms and clinical aspects”; and Dr. Gergina Stoyanova on the subject: Heredity, pre-cancerosis and monitoring of patients with colorectal carcinoma”

CONCLUSION: Assoc. Prof. Handzhiev is the sole candidate in the competition for an academic position “Professor” for the scientific specialty “Gastroenterology” for the needs of the Gastroenterology Department of Acibadem City Clinic UMBAL.

Associate Professor Handzhiev is one of Bulgaria’s leading Gastroenterology experts, with special skills and merits in the field percutaneous diagnostic and therapeutic procedures in the gastroenterological practice.

Based on his rich professional experience, with his scientific achievements recognized in Bulgaria, some of them also abroad, an initiator and participant in many successful endeavors in the field conventional and interventional gastroenterology and taking into account the Rules of Procedure for development of the academic staff, I deem that Assoc. Prof. Handzhiev, MD meets the requirements and I hereby give my positive evaluation and strongly

