

REVIEW

Per. № 3882/08.10.25

By prof. Panayot Fotev Kurtev MD, PhD

Subject: Participation in the competition (announced in State Gazette No. 34/22.04.2025) for the academic position of “Professor” in Oncology, in the field of higher education 7. “Health and Sports”, professional field 7.1. “Medicine”, for the needs of the Faculty of Medicine at Burgas State University “Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov”.

The sole candidate in the present competition is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kiril Georgiev Kirov, PhD.

The submitted documents comply with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for Awarding Academic Degrees and Occupying Academic Positions at Burgas State University “Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov”.

1. Biographical Data of the Candidate

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kiril Georgiev Kirov, PhD, was born on January 22, 1966. He graduated from the English Language High School in Varna in 1985.

In 1993, he completed his medical degree at the Medical University of Varna. In 1998, he obtained a specialization in surgery after training and clinical practice at the Second Surgical Clinic of the District Hospital – Varna.

Until 2008, he worked at the Department of General and Operative Surgery at University Hospital “St. Marina” – Varna. He later headed the Department of Oncological Surgery at the Specialized Hospital for Active Treatment of Oncological Diseases “Dr. M. Markov” – Varna. From 2010 to 2024, he led the Oncosurgery Department at the Comprehensive Cancer Center – Shumen. Since December 2024, he has been part of the Surgical Department of the Cancer Center – Burgas, and since May 2025, he has been appointed Head of the newly established Clinic of Oncological Surgery at the same institution.

Dr. Kirov is fluent in English and Russian, which enables active participation in international scientific and professional communities.

His postgraduate education includes numerous specialized trainings in Bulgaria and abroad, notably:

- Hepatobiliary and transplant surgery (Israel),
- Kidney and pancreas transplantation (USA),
- Diagnostic and operative laparoscopy (Medical University – Pleven),
- Use of mechanical staplers in surgery (USA),
- Abdominal ultrasonography (Medical University – Varna),
- Conventional gastrointestinal endoscopy with biopsy (Medical University – Pleven),
- Open and laparoscopic techniques for hernias (Greece).

2. Research and Teaching Activities

In 2015, Assoc. Prof. Kiril Kirov, PhD, defended a dissertation titled "Optimization of Outcomes in Conventional and Laparoscopic Colorectal Resections", earning the degree of Doctor. The dissertation presents an in-depth analysis of various surgical approaches in colorectal surgery, with a focus on minimally invasive techniques, their safety, efficacy, and impact on long-term clinical outcomes.

In 2017, he was habilitated as an Associate Professor in Oncology at Medical University-Pleven, based on a scholarly work dedicated to the challenges of modern oncological surgery.

His academic output includes over 50 scientific publications, featured in reputable Bulgarian and international peer-reviewed journals. His research spans surgery, oncology, gastroenterology, and coloproctology, with particular emphasis on:

- The multidisciplinary approach in the treatment of colorectal neoplasms;
- Prevention and management of anastomotic complications;
- Optimization of surgical protocols for gastrointestinal malignancies.

Dr. Kirov is the author of two monographs that make significant contributions to medical literature:

1. *"Colorectal Precancerous Conditions"* (2017) – a systematic review of diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to precancerous lesions of the colon and rectum;
2. *"Colorectal Anastomotic Insufficiency: Prevention, Consequences and Treatment"* (2021) – presented as the habilitation work for the current competition. This work offers a critical analysis of the pathogenesis and clinical management of anastomotic leaks, including up-to-date surgical strategies for their mitigation.

For the purpose of the academic promotion to "Professor," the candidate submitted a total of 27 scientific works, distributed as follows:

- Habilitation thesis (monograph) – 1;
- Publications and conference papers indexed in international databases (Scopus and Web of Science) – 12;
- Publications and papers in peer-reviewed journals and collections – 14.

In 16 of these publications, Dr. Kirov is the first or sole author, underscoring his leading role in research activities.

In the academic year 2015/2016, he taught at the Department of Clinical Medical Sciences at the Medical University – Varna, delivering 180 hours of instruction in the course "Surgical Diseases." From 2021 to 2025, he gave lectures on "Medico-social Aspects of Oncological Diseases" at the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – Pleven. The course spans four semesters with 25 hours of lectures and 5 hours of practical training each, aimed at developing interdisciplinary skills for managing oncology patients.

As a scientific supervisor, Dr. Kirov has mentored three doctoral students, one of whom successfully defended a dissertation in 2023. Additionally, he has supervised one surgical resident and trained three clinical interns.

He has participated in three interdisciplinary scientific projects, all of which show strong practical orientation and have contributed to the implementation of new therapeutic protocols and the enrichment of academic curricula with current scientific findings.

3. Clinical and Surgical Practice

Over the past three years, Assoc. Prof. Kiril Kirov, PhD he has performed a total of 804 surgical interventions, 685 of which as the lead surgeon. These include 413 complex and highly complex surgeries and 272 medium and minor procedures. Additionally, he has assisted in 119 operations, including 78 of high complexity.

He applies a broad range of surgical techniques, demonstrating a high level of individualized operative strategy. His main area of expertise is colorectal surgery, including multivisceral resections for advanced malignant diseases.

Dr. Kirov's clinical work is distinguished not only by volume but also by innovation, based on modern oncological principles, a multidisciplinary approach, a minimally invasive surgical techniques and a strong focus on quality of life for cancer patients.

4. Scientific Contributions

Based on the submitted works, the following key scientific-theoretical and applied contributions can be summarized:

- *Investigation of colorectal anastomotic insufficiency.* Including comprehensive study of incidence, pathogenesis, risk factors, and clinical outcomes. A diagnostic and treatment algorithm has been developed and implemented, contributing to reduced postoperative morbidity and mortality.
- *Optimization of surgical outcomes in gastrointestinal diseases.* Achieving consistently good results in patients with neoplastic and inflammatory digestive disorders, underscoring the effectiveness of applied techniques.
- *Comparative analysis of open vs. laparoscopic hernioplasty.* Clinical follow-up confirms the benefits of laparoscopic techniques using self-fixating mesh in inguinal hernias, including lower recurrence and complication rates.
- *Documentation of rare clinical cases.* Original surgical approaches in rare oncologic conditions have been described, expanding knowledge in the field of oncologic surgery.
- *Contribution to international scientific visibility.* Many of Dr. Kirov's publications are indexed in global databases and address current challenges in oncological surgery. These works hold scientometric value and have been cited a total of 39 times in journals indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, and their H-index is 3. Most of them are relevant to shaping research policy in resource-limited settings.

5. Conclusion

The materials submitted for the competition demonstrate his professional qualities, teaching competence, and scholarly interdisciplinary interests.

The analysis of the well-prepared documentation and supporting evidence of his comprehensive research activity, as well as the fulfilment of the required scientometric indicators, shows that Assoc. Prof. Kiril Georgiev Kirov, PhD, DM, fully meets the

requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), its Implementing Regulations, and the Rules and Procedures for the Acquisition of Academic Degrees and for Holding Academic Positions at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov." This allows me to give a **positive evaluation** and **recommend that he be appointed to the academic position of *Professor* in the scientific field of *Oncology*** within the professional area 7.1. Medicine, for the needs of the Faculty of Medicine at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov."

10. 09. 2025
Sofia

(Prof. Panayot Kurtev)