

OPINION

**from Assoc. Prof. Sonya Nencheva, PhD
Director of the Medical College,
Burgas State University “Prof. dr. Assen Zlatarov,”**

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition for occupying the academic position of “Associate Professor” in Higher Education Area 7: “Healthcare and Sports,” Professional Field 7.1 “Medicine,” Scientific Specialty “Radiation Therapy” for the needs of Burgas State University “Prof. dr. Assen Zlatarov,” announced in the State Gazette, issue 61/29.07.2025, and on the website of BSU “Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov.”

One applicant has submitted documents and has been admitted participating—Kiril Zhelev Zhelev, MD, PhD.

According to Order No. RD-345/30.09.2025 of the Rector of Burgas State University “Prof. dr. Assen Zlatarov” and report reg. No. 354/19.09.2025, I have been appointed as Chair and internal member of the Scientific Jury for the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Higher Education Area 7: Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.1 Medicine, Scientific Specialty “Radiation Therapy.”

General Presentation of the Submitted Materials

The set of materials submitted by Kiril Zhelev Zhelev, MD, PhD, in electronic format is in accordance with the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for Acquisition of Academic Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Burgas State University “Prof. dr. Assen Zlatarov,” the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and includes the following documents:

1. Application to the Rector requesting admission to the competition.
2. Copy of the announcement in the State Gazette.

3. Curriculum vitae (creative biography).
4. Document verifying professional experience pursuant to Art. 1, item 2.
5. Copy of the PhD diploma.
6. Certificates and attestations for courses and additional qualifications.
7. Copies of scientific works.
8. Documents related to teaching activity.
9. Documents concerning participation in research projects.
10. List of scientific forums in which the candidate has participated.
11. Reference for compliance with the minimum requirements.
12. Complete list of publications.
13. List of publications submitted for the competition.
14. Author's report on scientific contributions.
15. Citation report.
16. Declarations in accordance with Paragraph 15 of the current Regulations.

The candidate, Kiril Zhelev Zhelev, MD, PhD, has submitted a complete list of his scientific publications for participation in the present competition, comprising 33 scientific works, of which 23 are in scientific journals indexed and abstracted in the world-renowned databases Scopus and Web of Science, and 10 are publications and conference papers in non-indexed journals with scientific peer review or in edited collective volumes. The scientific works submitted for the competition are independent of the dissertation.

Based on the submitted documents, it is evident that the candidate's professional qualifications and quantitative indicators of scientific development meet the requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Higher Education Area 7: Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.1 Medicine, Scientific Specialty "Radiation Therapy."

Brief Biographical Data of the Candidate

Kiril Zhelev, MD, PhD, completed his secondary education in 2010 at the High School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences "Dobri Chintulov" in Sliven, and in 2016 obtained a master's degree in medicine from the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" in Varna. He acquired his specialty in Radiation Therapy in 2022.

In 2024, he successfully defended the educational and scientific degree Doctor in the scientific specialty Oncology, on the topic: **"The prognostic value of the preoperative NAR score and its association with the skeletal muscle index in patients with rectal carcinoma undergoing preoperative chemoradiotherapy"** at the Specialized Hospital for Active Treatment in Oncology "Prof. Ivan Chernozemsky," Sofia, as an independent doctoral candidate.

From 2017 to 2019 he worked at University Hospital "St. Marina," Varna; from 2019 to 2022 at "Uni Hospital," Panagyurishte; and from 2022 to 2025 at "Heart and Brain" Hospital, Pleven. He is currently employed in the Radiation Therapy Department of University Hospital "Deva Maria," Burgas.

Zhelev, MD has participated in numerous prestigious scientific forums, including the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) in 2022; the congresses of the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) in 2020, 2021, and 2025; the conferences of the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025; and the European Multidisciplinary Congress on Urological Cancers (EMUC) in 2025. He is a member of the Bulgarian Medical Association (BMA) and the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO).

Kiril Zhelev, MD speaks English and German.

General Characteristics of the Candidate's Activity

Assessment of the Candidate's Teaching Activity

Kiril Zhelev, MD, PhD, has taught medical and dental students in the discipline "Radiation Therapy" – in both Bulgarian-language (BLP) and English-language (ALP) programs at the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Dental Medicine of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov," Varna, during the period 2017–2019. Dr. Zhelev has completed a total of 582 teaching hours, of which 378 hours in the Bulgarian-language program (BEP) and 204 hours in the English-language program (ALP).

Assessment of the Candidate's Scientific and Applied Research Activity

Kiril Zhelev, MD, PhD, participates in the competition with 33 scientific works. Of the scientific works submitted for the competition, 1 is single-authored and 32 are co-authored; 16 are published in national journals and 17 in international journals. Twenty-three of the publications are peer-reviewed and indexed.

Zhelev's, MD scientific activity is further demonstrated through his participation in numerous forums. He has taken part in both national and international conferences.

Scientific-Applied Contributions and Citations of the Candidate

The contributions and research interests of Kiril Zhelev, MD, PhD, as reflected in the scientific output submitted for the competition, are of applied and original significance in the fields of Radiation Therapy and Oncology:

1. Studies on sarcopenia in patients with rectal carcinoma.
2. Radiosurgery in meningiomas.
3. Research on the predictive role of SUVmax in patients undergoing radiosurgery for brain metastases.
4. Studies on distress in cancer patients.
5. Investigation of the frequency of KRAS mutations in patients with colorectal carcinoma and their prognostic significance in the treatment of liver metastases using radiosurgery.
6. Research in the area of sarcopenia (additional studies).

Zhelev, MD, PhD, has submitted 10 scientific publications in journals indexed in globally recognized scientific databases—publications considered equivalent to a monograph. For this category of indicators, Zhelev, MD achieves **119.23 points**, with the required minimum being **100 points**.

The scientific results obtained from the presented studies have been personally reported by the candidate at numerous specialized scientific conferences and congresses.

The total number of citations in Bulgarian and international scientific sources is **10**. All citations are in scientific journals indexed to major international databases (Scopus and Web of Science).

Citations in authoritative international publications confirm the quality of the scientific work produced by the candidate.

The candidate has provided a correct and complete list of citations.

Assessment of the Candidate's Personal Contribution

I believe that the stated contributions and results obtained are, to a large extent, the personal achievement of the candidate. The personal contribution of Kiril Zhelev Zhelev, MD, PhD in Medicine, is also evident from the fact that in a large portion of the scientific works submitted for the competition, he is the first author.

Critical Remarks and Recommendations

I recommend that Kiril Zhelev Zhelev, MD, PhD in Medicine, continue to make efforts to disseminate his results in scientific publications that are peer-reviewed and indexed in internationally recognized databases of scientific information.

Conclusion

Kiril Zhelev Zhelev, MD, PhD in Medicine, has extensive practical experience with achievements recognized by his colleagues. The long and challenging path of his development as a specialist has contributed to his growth as both a physician and a researcher.

The overall scientific output of Kiril Zhelev Zhelev, MD, PhD in Medicine, corresponds to the professional field and the scientific specialty of the announced competition.

The documents and materials submitted by Kiril Zhelev Zhelev, MD, PhD in Medicine, meet all the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), its Implementing Regulations, and the "Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at BSU "Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov". They meet—and in some indicators exceed—the minimum quantitative requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Radiation Therapy" at BSU "Prof. dr. Assen Zlatarov."

I consider that sufficient scientific and applied contributions have been achieved.

After reviewing the materials and scientific works submitted for the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific-applied and original contributions contained therein, I give a

positive evaluation and recommend that the Scientific Jury prepare a report-proposal for the election of Kiril Zhelev Zhelev, MD, PhD in Medicine, to the academic position of “Associate Professor” in “Radiation Therapy,” within Higher Education Area 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.1 Medicine, at BSU “Prof. dr. Assen Zlatarov”.

19 November 2025

Prepared by: .
(Assoc. Prof. Sonya Nencheva, PhD in Medicine)