

OPINION

- By:** Prof. NEVENA KOSTOVA TZACHEVA, MD, PhD, DSc
- Regarding:** The application of the following candidate for the academic position of **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR** at the Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov State University, Burgas, Department of Rehabilitation and Maritime Medicine of the Faculty of Public Health and Healthcare. The procedure has been announced in the State Gazette issue 5 dated 17 January 2020
- Candidate:** SVETLA MIHAYLOVA SHOPOVA, PhD, Chief Assistant

In accordance with Ordinance PK 79 of 13 March 2020 by the Chancellor of the Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov State University, Burgas, I present the evaluation below in my capacity as an external member of the Academic Jury.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Ms. Svetla Shopova has completed her secondary education in 1993 graduating from the G. S. Rakovski French Language High School, Burgas. In 2003 she graduated from the Medical College of the Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University, Burgas in the specialism of Physical Therapy. She was awarded a Bachelor degree in 2007 and a Master's degree in 2010 in the specialism of Business Management – Health Management. In 2017 she defended successfully her doctoral dissertation on the topic "SPA Centres Services Quality Assessment System" in the 7.6 professional field and in the academic specialism of Theory and Methodology of Physical Education and Sports Training (including Kinesiatrics Methodology). Ms. Shopova has obtained additional qualifications in the spheres of SPA&Wellness, Aesthetics and Dermatology, Therapeutic Massage and Electrotherapy, and she holds certificates in Manual Therapy Techniques and Lymphatic Drainage (Burgas, 8 -10 February 2013) and a Certificate of training for working with BTL system "No-Needle Mesotherapy" Lipo Contour (BTL INDUSTRIES LTD., 20 November 2011). The candidate has also declared good communication skills, team-working, planning and organisational skills, as well as a flexible work approach. She uses three foreign languages: French, English and Russian,

at a good and very good level, and she is computer literate with competence in Word, Word, MS Office, Internet, Clock, ORAC.

Ms. Svetla Shopova has based her professional development in 17 years of practice on the skills and knowledge she has acquired during her studies and qualification courses, and she has consecutively worked as a trauma and orthopaedic physical therapist in the St. Sophia Medical Centre, Burgas (2003-2004), as a SPA therapist in the Sun Palace Hotel, Sunny Beach (2005-2006), as a SPA Manager in Grand Hotel Primorets & SPA, Burgas (2010 to present). Since 2009 she has been holding consecutively the positions of an Assistant and a Chief Assistant in the Medical College at the Prof., Dr. Asen Zlatarov University. The candidate has not provided any information about membership in any academic societies or public organisations.

2. SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH AND APPLIED SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

2.1. Judging by the materials provided for the competition, Dr. Svetla Shopova, Chief Assistant, meets the criteria set out in the Rules for the conditions to be awarded academic degrees and to occupy academic positions in Prof., Dr. Asen Zlatarov University and the university's Ordinance on the Awarding of Academic Degrees and Occupying Academic Positions, with the following contributions: one habilitation dissertation of 110 pages titled Therapeutic Massage 'Toolkit' (ISBN 978-619-7559-07-1.), a chapter of the monograph Quality of the Services in the Health and Wellness Tourism (based on the SPA centres in Bulgaria) with co-authors Karadzhova, Zl., and Gonchev, V. (ISBN 978-619-7559-01-9), 20 scientific publications (incl. 3 independent and 17 as a co-author) in non-referenced journals with scientific peer reviews or published in collective volumes. The candidate has enclosed statements of equal contribution by the other co-authors in their joint publication. Two textbooks were enclosed as well: in co-authorship with Stoycheva M. M., Vasilev, V., Grozeva, A., Pancheva, V., Gavrailov, Y. & Ivanova, Z. (2015). Medico-social Rehabilitation of Diabetes Mellitus and Its Complications (ISBN 978-619-7123-34-0) and in co-authorship with Lecheva, Z. & Gavrailov, Y. (2018). Preventing Occupational Stress in Healthcare Specialists. (ISBN:978-619-7125-56-6). Ms. Svetla Shopova presented a total of 24 publications for the competition, which earn 611.07 points against the 450 points required for the position and thus she fully meets the requirements of the Rules of the University.

The candidate has participated in the realisation of five scientific and research projects in the field of her usual activity in the sphere of university students teaching and studying the balneological resources of the Burgas area for prevention of the socially significant illnesses.

2.2. The principal areas of scholarly interests in Ms. Svetla Shopova's publications and projects are predominantly in continuation of her academic studies and graduation work and her scientific research. **Her doctoral dissertation which studies the opportunities to apply the SPA and Wellness interventions as means of prevention**, occupies naturally **the conceptual focus of her publications**. It is important both for the purpose of updating the therapy methods, and for the training of the students and the professional training of the SPA therapy practitioners. Other publications treat the prevention of cardiovascular pathology as the most widely occurring among the population, and particularly notable are those of them which adhere to the philosophy of providing a full life or to the Happy Planet Index as interpreted by some Danish authors. **The proposed machine-aided exercise as a novelty in the bronchial asthma prevention** can be classed as **innovative searching of a methodological profile in kinesiatics**. The same applies to the integrative approach proposed by Svetla Shopova and co-authors in the bronchial asthma therapy in combination with alternative medicine. Another focus of her applied scientific research is the use of some innovative forms, methods and approaches to theoretical and practical training on the issues of diabetes and its complications, such as diabetic foot and diabetic polyneuropathy, including use of the potential of the natural and pre-formed physical factors for rehabilitation of diabetes mellitus and its complications. This applies to a great extent to yet another group of diseases which is in need of active and innovative prevention and therapy, namely the diseases of the musculoskeletal system and the peripheral nervous system, such as juvenile arthritis. Her research can be classed as applicable in practice and significant for the most common occupational diseases: the ones of the musculoskeletal system and the connective tissue. In the field of stress prevention and particularly the occupational stress, are the publications (majority of them in co-authorship) which **accentuate on the diagnostics and the levels of manifestation of the occupational stress in healthcare professionals working in hospitals**. The models and toolkit for prevention and efficient management of the occupational stress, which she has been developing, are of essential importance to the public health and the providing of modern healthcare by using **modern methods and approaches which provide wholeness and fullness to the patients and the clients of the SPA&Wellness centres**. I would also categorise as a novel scientific contribution of applied type **the applying of some researches on kinesiatic means** of vestibular rehabilitation. Among the co-authored publications by the candidate are those which accentuate on the analysis of some kinesiatic means to act on the balance, where I

find it correct, that the authors have researched first the anatomical and physiological specifics of the vestibular system. Another standing out publication is the monograph on the **specialised massage techniques and tools of therapeutic massage**, which is intended for the training of healthcare specialists: physiotherapists (kinesitherapists, rehab specialists, ergotherapists), in the sphere of prevention of a number of occupational illnesses and disorders in risky work environment and work process.

The elements of the candidate's contribution in those researches and the resulting publications are varied, and equally complex is the scientific field and the main topics of the candidate: SPA&Wellness methodologies, procedures, techniques, etc., and all of them are scientifically justified, which allows me to evaluate as very valuable the aspiration of Ms. Svetla Shopova, Chief Assistant, to the position of an Associate Professor in this field. In my opinion, the academic, research and applied-science work illustrated by the publications and the contribution of Ms. Svetla Shopova in projects, has been developing in the right direction of unity of theory and applicability of the formulated theoretical models with suitable terminology, and the same applies to her participation in scientific projects, and I recommend that she broadens and promotes the results of her activity through participation in editorial teams, scientific societies and forum.

2.3. Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific peer reviews: 10 citations, and 2 in non-referenced journals with scientific peer reviews, 12 citations in total. This indicates interest and need to develop the academic and applied scientific activities on these topics and projects.

3. EVALUATION OF THE CANDIDATE'S TEACHING ACTIVITY

3.1. Ms. Svetla Shopova, Assistant, teaches 3 established modules in Prof., Dr. Asen Zlatarov University, Burgas: Therapeutic Massage in the full-time Bachelor Programme in Medical Rehabilitation and Occupational Therapy, SPA&Wellness Methods of Rehabilitation and Prevention, as well as Work-related Learning and Pre-graduation Practice in the full-time Bachelor Programme in Medical Rehabilitation and Occupational Therapy.

The candidate teaches 2 modules in the Medical College: Therapeutic Massage in the full-time Professional Bachelor Programme in Physiotherapy, and SPA&Wellness in the full-time Professional Bachelor Programme in Physiotherapy.

For teaching purposes Ms. Svetla Shopova, Chief Assistant, has developed the **contents for 5 modules**: for the Therapeutic Massage module and the Work-related Learning and Pre-graduation Practice module for Bachelor and Professional Bachelor Programmes, as well as

for the SPA&Wellness Methods for Rehabilitation and Prevention module for the Medical Rehabilitation and Occupational Therapy Programme, and for the SPA&Wellness Module.

In her contribution to the textbooks in co-authorship with some experienced authors Ms. Shopova has developed two very essential and important topics: on the medico-social rehabilitation of the patients with diabetes and those with complications, as well as on the prevention of occupational stress in healthcare specialists. **Those are actually two primary parts of the constructive and the secondary prevention, which for the time being are not sufficiently provided for in the healthcare policy and as such they are well developed in the educational concepts of the Faculty of Public Health and Healthcare. I definitely find this important for all students and trainees (medical university students, SPA therapists, specialists in the Wellness centres) – for the obtaining of knowledge, skills and competences in that sphere.**

3.2 Ms. Svetla Shopova, Chief Assistant, has been sufficiently active teaching in the last 5 years by lecturing and tutoring, leading work-related learning and pre-graduation practice modules, which is duly certified in accordance with the administrative requirements of the Rules. Her average *per annum* teaching activity is 512.3 academic hours, which exceeds the required 360 academic hours. As I first above mentioned, Ms. Svetla Shopova would broaden the scope of her teaching as a habilitated academic person and she would thus facilitate the creating of new module contents and even new courses which are necessary to teach competences in prevention of the socially significant illnesses and as a result to integrate the public health into the European guidelines and the WHO's 'Health for All'.

On the basis of the scientific production, the scholarly interests, the registered teaching activity and the premise of a broad community service, I recommend with full confidence, that the members of the Academic Jury should award a positive assessment to Ms. Svetla Mihaylova Shopova, PhD, Chief Assistant, and she should be granted the academic rank and the position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in Social Medicine and Organisation of Healthcare and Pharmacy for the needs of the Department of Rehabilitation and Maritime Medicine at the Faculty of Public Health and Healthcare of the Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University, Burgas.

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