

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natasha Dakeva Danova, MD
in the competition for the academic post of 'Professor', field of higher education 7. Health and Sport, professional area 7.1. Medicine,
in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Health Management",
for the needs of the Cardiology Clinic at the Tsar Boris III National Multidisciplinary Transport Hospital, announced in the State Gazette, issue 15/06.02.2026

One candidate is participating in the announced competition – Assoc. Prof. Dr Anelia Milkova Lukova, MD, who has submitted all the necessary documents for participation in the competition, in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations on the conditions and procedures for the award of academic degrees and the holding of academic posts at the Tsar Boris III National Multidisciplinary Transport Hospital.

Brief details of the candidate's career development

Assoc. Prof. Anelia Lukova graduated with a medical degree in 1986 from the Medical University of Sofia. Since 1990, she has specialized in neurology, and since 1994 in psychiatry. Since 2006, she has held a Master's degree in Health Management from the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical University of Sofia. In 2009, following the defense of her thesis on the topic "Psychosocial aspects and prevention of alcohol poisoning in school-age children", Assoc. Lukova was awarded the academic and scientific degree of Doctor of Medicine in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy". Since 2012, she has been an Associate Professor in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy".

Assoc. Prof. Lukova's professional career began at the District Hospital in Vidin as a neurologist from 1986 to 1999. Since then, she has worked as a psychiatrist at the Clinic of Toxicology at the University Hospital for Emergency and Specialised Medical Care "Pirogov".

The candidate has completed a number of specializations abroad: a Tempus Programme scholarship from the Ministry of Health in France; a fellow of the Katsarov Foundation in Lausanne, Switzerland; of the French Embassy in France; and of the Group for the Fight against Drug Use and Trafficking in Luxembourg, which have enriched her theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

General description of the candidate's research activity

The publications and references submitted for the competition demonstrate the candidate's significant research output in the fields of clinical management and disease management; public health; toxicology, etc., both prior to and following her appointment to the academic post of 'Associate Professor'.

In this competition, Associate Professor Lukova is participating with 178 academic works, broken down by type as follows: published habilitation thesis – monograph – 1; co-authored monograph following appointment as Associate Professor – 1; book chapter following appointment as Associate Professor – 2; chapter from a textbook for students at the Faculty of Public Health – Medical University – Sofia (post-associate professor) – 1; publications in Bulgarian scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned scientific databases – 17 (post-associate professor 7); publications in Bulgarian non-refereed peer-reviewed journals – 48 (24 since becoming an associate professor); publications in foreign specialised indexed journals – 22 (14 since becoming an associate professor); publications in foreign specialised non-indexed journals with peer review – 4 (3 since becoming an associate professor). All publications are correctly described, and those published after attaining the academic rank of 'associate professor' are attached to the competition materials.

Her research activity includes a total of 80 participations in scientific forums – 52 at national and 28 at international forums (of which 48 were after obtaining the academic rank of “associate professor” – 33 at national and 15 at international forums). Assoc. Prof. Anelia Lukova is the sole and first author in 58% of her academic output. Her academic output since her habilitation as an associate professor accounts for 56% of her total academic output. Since taking up the academic post of associate professor, the candidate has 53 publications and has registered 48 participations in scientific forums, 15 of which were abroad.

Research areas

The research covers scientific issues focused on current and significant problems in the field of the academic discipline of the announced competition and can be categorised into several areas:

- *Clinical management and disease management*

In this area, the monograph ‘Management of Mental Disorders in the Emergency Department’ deserves special attention, as do related publications that summarise the candidate’s theoretical knowledge and practical experience. This work makes an important methodological contribution to the field of mental health and represents the first comprehensive presentation of the aforementioned issues in emergency settings, with an emphasis on integrated medical care.

Based on the collected data, the following make a significant practical contribution: the proposed, comprehensive measures, based on a functional approach to risk management whilst ensuring patient safety in emergency settings within a hospital; the integrated model for the prevention of alcohol dependence involving team-based care; the training module developed for postgraduate qualification for somatic care teams; the specialised organisational technologies developed for the management of mental disorders in the emergency hospital, with the implementation of a liaison psychiatric model – a bipolar relationship between doctor and patient and between doctor and treating team. A protocol has also been proposed for the application of behavioral and pharmacological measures to prevent cognitive impairment in hospitalized adult patients.

- *Health of vulnerable population groups*

The contributions in this area mainly concern addictions and suicidal behaviour. A critical analysis has been made of alcohol poisoning in childhood, which is a topical issue in our time and has medical and social significance. Aspects of detoxification in hospital settings have been studied, and data from methods for identifying personality traits in alcohol-dependent individuals have been summarised. Suicidal crises in children and adolescents, requiring the mandatory application of an interdisciplinary and team-based consultative approach, are examined in detail. Using the methods of modern epidemiology of non-communicable diseases, a retrospective study is presented on deliberate self-poisoning among older adults who, due to chronic illnesses and their age, are vulnerable and susceptible to suicide attempts.

Practical and applied contributions include the proposed model of an intervention program to overcome heroin dependence, improve the patient’s physical and mental health, and facilitate their family and social reintegration; the behavioral algorithm for children following a suicide attempt, with a focus on opportunities for counseling and therapeutic work in outpatient care and in emergency hospital settings. For the first time in Bulgaria, a clinical-epidemiological study has been conducted on suicide attempts involving corrosive poisons and the motivation for such behaviour across different age groups. The conclusion drawn is of significant practical value: effective horizontal communication between the responsible organizations and institutions at the national, regional, and local levels, and vertical communication within the hierarchical networks of the individual participating institutions and organizations, is essential for the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of addictions.

- *Clinical toxicology*

Scientific and theoretical contributions in this area include: the analysis of successful medical practices requiring timely diagnostic orientation and knowledge of therapeutic behaviour; the study of deliberate self-poisoning with sleeping pills and other substances, with a justified need for awareness among medical teams in both outpatient and inpatient care regarding the use of psychotropic medications in modern society. With regard to mental health, the use in medical

practice of antipsychotics with fewer adverse effects is discussed, and data from long-term studies on self-poisoning in patients with mental disorders are presented. A number of articles are devoted to a serious public health problem – carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, which can occur in accidents and natural disasters, military conflicts and acts of terrorism, affecting large groups of people and causing severe impairment and subsequent persistent cognitive disorders, with the full financial burden of healthcare. A novelty for Bulgaria is the comprehensive model developed for diagnostic and therapeutic management of intoxications in both out-of-hospital and in-hospital medical care.

- *Public health and preventive programs for adolescents*

A theoretical contribution to science in this field is the conceptual framework of the psychosocial dimensions and possible interventions in cases of alcohol poisoning among young people, including health promotion; the analysis of trends in alcohol intoxication among children in relation to various characteristics of the family environment. Innovative pedagogical technologies for improving school-age children's knowledge and skills regarding a healthy lifestyle have been summarised. It is important to note that, in this context, the need for health education in contemporary Bulgarian schools is substantiated.

The first systematic study conducted in Bulgaria on alcohol poisoning in children, including its causes and circumstances, can serve as a methodological basis for further in-depth studies of the social and behavioural determinants of health. The model of a comprehensive program for active selective prevention developed in this study also makes a practical contribution and can be used in the development of an appropriate national program.

The candidate's works have been published in various prestigious scientific journals, both Bulgarian and international.

Associate Professor Lukova provides citation reports compiled by the Central Medical Library at MU-Sofia and NACID. The Central Medical Library's report shows that 21 citations were found in the Scopus database (Elsevier), with an H-index of 3, whilst the Web of Knowledge (Clarivate) database – 17 citations, with an H-index of 3. The NACID report shows that 32 citations were found in the Web of Science, Scopus and other databases. The total Impact Factor (Web of Science) of the journals in which Assoc. Prof. Lukova's publications appear is IF 42.761 and the total SJR is 16.326. According to a report on the Impact Factor (Web of Science) and Scimago Journal Rank (SCOPUS) of the journals in which articles citing Anelia Milkova Lukova's publications were found, the total IF is 30.039 and the SJR is 14.459. Additionally, evidence of 5 citations in dissertations has been provided.

Teaching and research activities.

Assoc. Prof. Lukova has been an adjunct lecturer at the Yordanka Filaretova Medical College, part of the Medical University of Sofia, on the 'Rehabilitation Specialist' program since 2019, with a total teaching load of 270 hours; in the last three years, this has been 115 hours. She has delivered a series of lectures in a course for postgraduate trainees studying for a specialisation in emergency medicine (2014–2016). She is a lecturer in a continuing education course for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. She is the supervisor of two PhD students undertaking independent research, one of whom defended their thesis in 2015. The monograph 'Management of Mental Disorders in the Emergency Hospital' and her co-authorship of the teaching guide 'Global Population Health' by the Faculty of Public Health at MU-Sofia are of educational and pedagogical significance. The candidate has developed a five-lecture course for postgraduate trainees in emergency medicine and students pursuing a "Professional Bachelor's" degree at the "Yordanka Filaretova" Medical College. Assoc. Prof. Lukova served as the Research Coordinator at the Specialized Therapeutic Complex of the N.I. Pirogov University Hospital for the period 2013–2016.

Expert activities.

Assoc. Prof. Lukova served as an expert for the Open Society Foundation on the project "Detoxification of Substance Abuse and Drug Addiction" (2001–2002); as a consultant for SOS Children's Villages in Bulgaria (2003–2004); member of the Scientific Council of the N.I. Pirogov University Hospital (2013–2014); co-founder of the Bulgarian Society of Emergency Medicine – 2014; member of scientific juries; Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the journal "Emergency Medicine"

Compliance with minimum national requirements

The submitted report on the minimum national scientometric indicators exceeds the requirements for the academic position of “professor”. With a required minimum total of 550 points, the candidate has 1734.86 points.

Minimum required points by indicator group

Group of indicators	Content	Professor	Assoc. Prof. Lukova
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2		
C	Indicators 3 or 4	100	100
G	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	200 (180 for PN 7.6)	934.86
D	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	100	505
E	Sum of indicators from 13 to the end	100 (80 for PN 7.6)	145
TOTAL		550	1734.86

Conclusion

The candidate is an accomplished professional with extensive clinical experience and a body of scientific work that is both substantial in volume and diverse in content, with theoretical and practical contributions.

Based on the materials submitted for the competition and the analysis of her activities in research, teaching, and expert work, I give a positive evaluation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anelia Milkova Lukova, MD. By all measures, she fully meets the quantitative and qualitative indicators and criteria for the academic position of “professor,” as well as the requirements of the Higher Education Act, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations of the National Multidisciplinary Transport Hospital “Tsar Boris III.”

In view of the above, I recommend to the distinguished academic jury that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anelia Milkova Lukova, MD, be awarded the academic position of “Professor”, field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sport, professional field 7.1. Medicine, in the scientific speciality “Social Medicine and Health Management”, for the needs of the Cardiology Clinic at the National Multidisciplinary Transport Hospital “Tsar Boris III”.

28 May 2026


Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natasha Danova, MD