



PANDEMIC AND 2020 ZAGREB EARTHQUAKE DIDN'T STOP US

VIDA DEMARIN, MARKO PEĆINA

In spite of the two recent disasters—COVID-19 pandemic and strong earthquake in Zagreb, having the enormous impact to everyday life, we prepared for you a new double issue of our RAD medical sciences 50-51.

Activities of everyday life have almost stopped for many persons in our country and all over the world, but research and science could not be stopped!

As you know COVID-19 disease has started in December 2019. The new coronavirus, not known until then under the name SARS-Co-19-2 was identified as a cause of the disease. Disease has spread rapidly all over the world, causing immeasurable health and economic challenges.

World Health Organization (WHO) declared the global pandemic on March 11th 2020. The first patient with COVID-19 in Croatia was diagnosed on February 25th.

Even before that, on February 14th Department of Medical Sciences of our Academy together with Croatian Society for Biosafety and Biosecurity and the University Hospital for Infectious Diseases “Dr. Fran Mihaljević” organized the symposium “New Coronavirus from China: Biosecurity Threat and Challenge for Health Care Professionals”, catching extreme attention of many colleagues and other health professionals. More data about this symposium could be found in the News and Education part of this issue.

On March 17th members of Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts published the Statement related to COVID-19 pandemic, which can be found at the

Academy’s web site, thus contributing to better understanding of the whole situation.

A great deal of research has been carried on all over the world in order to get more insights about this new disease. In this issue we publish the review „COVID-19 pandemic – neurological aspects of the disease” which provides a comprehensive summary of the main clinical and neurological manifestations of this new infectious disease. The main clinical manifestations of COVID-19 are related to respiratory system, but neurological symptoms and diseases are also possible due to neuroinvasive potential of the virus. Most COVID-19 cases experience mild clinical symptoms and recover without complications, but 5% of cases need intensive care treatment. The most common neurological symptoms are headache, dizziness, hyposmia and hypogeusia. Neurological diseases which are associated with COVID-19 are stroke, encephalopathy, meningoencephalitis, and Guillain Barre syndrome. Preventive measures are the most effective for containment of COVID-19.

In the context of prevention and seriousness of pandemic, Croatia have long history which lead the past to 1377 when Dubrovnik’s (known in that time as City Ragusa) Great Council passed a ground-breaking law to prevent the spread of the pandemic requiring all incoming ships and trade caravans arriving from infected areas to submit to 30 days of isolation. *The legislation, Veniens de locis pestiferis non intret Ragusium vel districtum (engl. “Those arriving from plague-infected areas shall not enter Ragusa or its district”)*, stipulated that anyone coming from pernicious places must spend a month in the nearby town of Cavtat or the island of Mrkan for the purpose of disinfection before entering



the medieval walled city. In recent history we have great professor and medical doctor Andrija Štampar, his grandiose hygiene-epidemiology, prevention-prophylaxis and important curation program in organization of health measures and activities in former Yugoslavia countries and even wider in Europe was of high rating and quality. Even today, Štampars ideas and programs are still actual and highly cited in modern medicine, especially due to the actual pandemic.

We are all aware that strong earthquake, that hit Zagreb in early morning of March 22nd caused enormous damage. Material damage is huge, many buildings are destroyed, among them the Palace of our Academy, as well as its Library and the Glyphototheca, leaving us in fear and disbelief. Many people still don't have the place to live, schools, universities, hospitals, theatres,

museums, galleries are severely destroyed. This material damage would be repaired, sooner or later. As it was done after the big earthquake that happened in 1880. But repairing of our "mental damage" would need much more energy, confidence, trust and beliefs. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health care providers were devotedly working days and nights reducing the devastating consequences of COVID-19 disease. And now, after putting the virus under control, the work is not over! There is a huge need to repairing people's mind, to replace the fear with hope and to restore the inner peace.

And during all that time of torments and worries scientists are intensively engaged in trying to find the answer how to proceed for better and deal with the virus.



Figure 1. Lobby of the Palace of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts



Figure 2. Lobby of the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts