

BOOK REVIEW



Vladimir Hudolin and his work

Proceedings of the meeting held at 1st Croatian High School in Sušak 1999, by Duško Wölfl, Editor. Regional Center for Alcoholism, Rijeka, 2007

In the introduction, the editor D. Wölfl explains why and how the conference about Vladimir Hudolin took place at 1st High School of Sušak in Rijeka. Hudolin himself attended and graduated from the School, which organizes periodical meetings on notable persons from the Croatian history that attended this school. The decision to hold the meeting on V. Hudolin was made by the editor after having participated in a congress of alcoholology in Italy, where he realized that Hudolin was much higher esteemed abroad than in his own, by that time independent country.

The book **Vladimir Hudolin and His Work** brings the following articles of his collaborators:

Professor Višnja Hudolin, PhD: Biography of Vladimir Hudolin

Head Doctor Darko Breitenfeld, PhD: Professor Vladimir Hudolin – my teacher

Assist. Professor Nebojša Lazić, PhD: Vladimir Hudolin and social psychiatry

Head Doctor Željko Marinić, PhD: Hudolin as a psychiatrist

Maja Stipaničić, MD: Hudolin's activity in Gorski Kotar

Milan Gudelj, PhD: Hudolin's influence on the development of alcoholology in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County

Francesco Piani, PhD: Hudolin's activity in Italy

Janez Rugelj, PhD: Professor Vladimir Hudolin, a paradigm of psychiatrist capable of conducting authoritative-ly and successfully large therapeutic groups

Radoslav Škalamera: Vladimir Hudolin's school days

Duško Wölfl: Bibliography of Vladimir Hudolin's published papers

In these articles, the authors bring back personal memories and present many data gained through collaboration with Vladimir Hudolin. Bibliography contains 651 published articles. The articles concerning Hudolin's activity in the district of Rijeka and Gorski Kotar are to be specially emphasized, presenting data on how some powerful and influential health care workers vigorously obstructed cooperation of Rijeka School of Medicine and Hudolin's University Department from Zagreb. Doing so, they caused incalculable damage to the development of medicine in the city of Rijeka. Collaboration with the experts in Gorski Kotar was much more successful.

Hudolin's school days are presented for the first time. Even then it was obvious that Hudolin was a versatile and interesting person. He wrote more than 40 books and about 600 scientific and professional articles, including chapters in 70 books by other authors, 110 scientific and 252 professional articles, 22 articles in medical encyclopedia and 97 book presentations and reviews.

In the book appendix, some new data on Hudolin are found. Three questions are posed:

- 1) Why Hudolin was not elected member of the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts?
- 2) Why Zagreb School of Medicine failed to realize at least a part of teaching at Hudolin's University Department of Neurology, Psychiatry, Alcoholism and Other Addictions (as University Department of the School of Dental Medicine)?
- 3) Why the institutions and a part of the profession refuse to recognize and support Hudolin's legacy even now, in the independent state of Croatia?

Answers to these questions suggest the existence of competitive social relations that are, to our regret, unsound and noxious instead of being professionally and scientifically profitable. These bad relations exist even at the highest academic level. It is also rather strange that a person of Hudolin's qualities was not elected member of the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts, considering the number and quality of his scientific and professional articles and books, and taking into account the enviable results of his numerous activities. There is no doubt that the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts should have been honored by such a person being its member.

On the other hand, there has been blindness to recognize the importance of Hudolin alcoholic treatment model and unwillingness to acknowledge the significance of his work, which is, with minor modifications, still used as the leading model of solving one of the greatest public health problems in the society and the lead-

ing model of social psychiatry. Hudolin's model through groups of self- and mutual help is also a model of how to approach and help patients with other somatic illnesses, and has been rapidly expanding.

Today, we have an odd situation: while in many countries all over the world new clubs of treated alcoholics emerge, the number of these clubs in Croatia is being stagnant. Leading these clubs has been left to a few enthusiasts and treated alcoholics, while social institutions including Ministry of Health have failed recognize the best and most comprehensive model of solving one of the greatest public health problems. This is also a significant indicator of the considerable deficiencies in Croatian medicine, health care and science. Because of the inappropriate sociopolitical structure as well as a tendency of false moralizing, the prevention of alcohol induced disturbances cannot be effective. Here, inadequate education of health care professionals in the field of alcoholology should also be noted. The ensuing financial losses for the society and the state can only be supposed. Recent investigations point to very high amounts. The problem of not treating alcoholics is not only of a financial nature. It is also a significant ethical problem of Croatian medicine and society in general.

Hudolin's treatment model has not only survived its creator by vitality and effectiveness but presents one of the basic levers of social psychiatry and medicine even today, and opens prospects to experts from other fields of medical science and practice.

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