

## NEWS

### **AWARD TO OUR RHEUMATOLOGIST IN SEVILLA – ASSISTANT PROFESSOR SIMEON GRAZIO**

The meeting entitled Advancing Arthritis Therapy: Addressing Patient Needs, was organized on February 4, 2006, in Seville, Spain. Experts in the field of rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug (DMARD) therapy shared their knowledge of the latest advances in arthritis care. Lecturers were the most distinguished European rheumatologists, Professors Maurizio Cutolo, David L. Scott, Piet van Riel, Jose M. Alvaro-Garcia and Philip Helliwell. Cochairs were Professors Josef Smolen and Piet van Riel. Advances in our understanding of the mechanism of action of DMARD therapy were thoroughly explained, the benefits of monotherapy and combination therapy were evaluated, highlighting the potential advantages of the newest therapies. Apart from plenary sessions, parallel interactive workshops utilizing pertinent case studies were held to discuss these topics in detail. The insight gained at the meeting enabled the participants to address the patient needs more effectively using current and novel treatments for rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis.

Before the beginning of the meeting, written materials in three areas were distributed to the participants: treatment of the patient with psoriatic arthritis, treatment of the patient with early rheumatoid arthritis, and treatment of the patient requiring combination therapy. Participants wrote their therapeutic options, and awards were given to the rheumatologists who, according to the scientific committee, offered the best treatment solution. Among 220 rheumatologists from all over Europe, Assist. Professor Simeon Grazio, head of the University Department of Rheumatology, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Medicine, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital from Zagreb, was the winner in the category of psoriatic arthritis. The award to Assist. Professor Grazio was presented by Professor Josef Smolen, head of the Department of Rheumatology at the Vienna Medical University, former President of the European League against Rheumatism. This award is a recognition to Croatian rheumatologists, showing that they stand aside with the best European experts today. We congratulate Assist. Professor Simeon Grazio.

*Assist. Professor Branimir Anić, MD, PhD*

## Academician Zvonko Kusić at Inter-Academic Forum on Global Health Issues, Mexico City, Mexico

At the beginning of October 2006, a great world conference entitled Inter-Academic Forum on Global Health Issues was held in Mexico City, Mexico, at which academician Zvonko Kusić, secretary of the Department of Medical Sciences, Croatian Academy of Science and Arts (CASA), took active part as a CASA representative. It was an international conference organized by Academia Nacional de Medicina of the host country, in collaboration with national medical academies of all Latin America countries and Spain, and with participation of many international organizations dealing with public health and health policy.

The conference topic was aging of the world population and numerous challenges imposed by population aging upon medicine and medical sciences, national health systems, economy and science in general. The conference was attended by renowned world scientists and experts from various fields, i.e. basic medical sciences, clinical medicine, health care organizations, public health, economy, politics, sociology, anthropology, etc.

On October 2, 2006, academician Kusić held a plenary lecture entitled Population Aging: Current Situation and Projections – The Case of Croatia, by Zvonko Kusić, Jure Murgić, Tomislav Jukić and Spomenka Tomek-Roksandić, extensively presenting the analysis of the current state of aging of the Croatian population, the causes that had led to this unfavorable tendency, future prospects, and numerous health, economic and political aspects of the considerable and constantly increasing proportion of the elderly in Croatia. Professor

Gregorio Perez Palacios, leader and moderator of the Forum workshop on the topic of population aging, emphasized and appraised the lecture as very interesting and informative.

At the conference, the highly topical issue of aging of the overall world population was addressed through an interdisciplinary approach. The trend was first recognized several decades ago, having since turned into a considerable problem in many industrialized countries, in Europe in particular. The more so, future projections are by far more serious, with a dramatic rise in the proportion of the elderly, those above 85 in particular. Aging of the population is not only a problem of the rich and industrialized countries, as it has also been anticipated to occur in less industrialized countries consequentially to their socioeconomic development.

In Croatia, the issue is even more pronounced, with a high proportion of people older than 65 (16.64%) in the overall population, ranking Croatia at the very top of the list of countries with a high proportion of elderly population. Croatia will have to face unavoidable and demanding reforms of the family, labor and retirement legislative and of health insurance system in particular, to be able to respond to this big demographic imbalance and to diminish its numerous unfavorable consequences. A solution should be searched for how to upgrade living standards as well as the population awareness, that would enable a birth rate increase from the current 1.5 to 2.2 births *per* family, i.e. 60,000 births *per* year, thus to ensure adequate manpower potential in the future. The problem of aging of the Croatian population will definitely be one of the major issues for the Croatia future in general.

*Jure Murgić*



### Thirty-Three Years of Cerebrovascular Laboratory at University Department of Neurology, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital, Zagreb

Early findings of Satomoura and Kaneko in 1960 in the assessment of hemodynamics in carotid artery by applying Doppler principles have led to the development of ultrasonography in a number of clinical settings in neurology. The Laboratory of Cerebrovascular Research at University Department of Neurology in our Hospital took a pioneer role in implementing ultrasonography techniques in daily assessment of hemodynamics in neurological patients. The first zero-crossing detector was supplied in 1974, and ever since the latest equipment released in the world has been purchased for the Laboratory of Cerebrovascular Research. Professor Vida Demarin was the first neuropsychiatrist in Croatia who received training in Doppler examination abroad, brought the new knowledge to our Hospital, and continued research in the field of neurosonology.

A significant proportion of Doppler diagnostics we owe to one of our guests, Professor Rune Aaslid, who has honored us with his visit on our celebration. In the year 1982, Professor Aaslid developed the idea of taking the existing ultrasound technology a step further; briefly, he devised a way of examining intracranial hemodynamics by using a 2 MHz probe, which opened up a brand new field of neurology and has rightfully made him a true historical figure. Those who know him will say that he is not only an extraordinary scientist, greatly admired in scientific circles, but also a modest person, always friendly and willing to lend a helping hand.

Professor Kurt Niederkorn, president of the European Society of Neurosonology and Cerebral Hemodynamics, has been a friend of ours for years and is one of the directors of the International Course in Dubrovnik, held yearly for the past 17 years. Professor Kurt Niederkorn always gladly participates in the courses and congresses we organize in Croatia.

The celebration of 33 years of Cerebrovascular Laboratory at University Department of Neurology, Sestre

milosrdnice University Hospital, took place on Friday, March 2, 2007 at the Multimedia Center. Professor Vida Demarin gave an overview of the beginning and recent developments in the application of ultrasound in neurology as well as of the development of the Laboratory of Cerebrovascular Research; Professor Rune Aaslid gave a lecture on the principles and problems in the interpretation of TCD recordings; Dr. Arijana Lovrenčić-Huzjan gave an overview of the application of TCD in confirmation of brain death; and Professor Kurt Niederkorn talked about the importance of neurosonology in the hands of neurologists. Our guests were pleased with the invitation as well as with the social program afterwards.

The longstanding research, up-to-date ultrasonography techniques and excellence of the laboratory work have resulted in the Laboratory appointment as the Reference Center for Neurovascular Disorders of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia.

Furthermore, our Laboratory of Cerebrovascular Research is collaborating with the leading manufacturers of ultrasound devices in the world, in order to improve the development of ultrasound software, the software for examination of the extracranial parts of carotid and vertebral arteries in particular.

The University Department of Neurology has been organizing courses for education of physicians interested in neurosonology as well as individual education at the Laboratory. The Laboratory of Cerebrovascular Research has launched several projects in collaboration with other university departments worldwide that are mainly focused on the application of different ultrasound techniques in a variety of cerebrovascular or neurodegenerative disorders.

The Laboratory of Cerebrovascular Research will continue working not only in daily patient examinations but will on the development of new research strategies and education of physicians interested in this exciting field of neurology.

*Vlasta Vuković*