

## Preface

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death in Croatia. However, the available data suggests that there is a substantial lack of relevant information on the prevalence of various cardiovascular risk factors and other information that could be useful in decision making and health policy creating. In an attempt to provide more information for policy, Andrija Stampar School of Public Health, Canadian Society for Statistics, Croatian National Institute for Public Health and Croatian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare have launched Croatian Adult Health Survey, a large cross-sectional survey of the adult population of Croatia. The survey was initiated in 2001 and the first cycle was carried out in 2003. The survey sampled a total of 9,070 respondents from all regions of Croatia, providing the common platform for public health research, with focus on cardiovascular diseases and risk factors prevalence.

This issue of *Collegium Antropologicum* provides an overview of the cardiovascular health in Croatia, with the main focus on the results from the Croatian Adult Health Survey 2003 (CAHS). It consists of a total of 27 articles that were written by a total of 72 authors, and covers wide range of topics related to cardiovascular health and other relevant public health topics. These cover the ten-year cardiovascular morbidity and mortality trends, regional patterns of various cardiovascular risk factors prevalence, studies that investigate the association of cardiovascular risk factors and behavioral patterns and psycho-social determinants, as well as other

relevant topics, including e.g. a study which investigates and compares the prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors in the mainland and island populations or a study that analyzes the legal and organizational aspects of cardiovascular disease prevention in Croatia.

Although the results presented here are mainly from the cross-sectional nature of the data, Croatian Adult Health Survey was not designed as a one-off project. The Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports has provided funding for the project continuation. The second project cycle begun in 2008, but the basic study design has changed into a follow-up study, by re-surveying the original 2003 CAHS sample. By doing this not only that we will continue providing relevant information for policy, but also we will be able to provide better answers on the general health of Croatian population, and be able to suggest where the biggest problems in terms of cardiovascular risk factors are.

I would sincerely like to thank to all the colleagues who were or currently are involved in this project for their sincere willingness to contribute and develop it further, and perhaps, as a principal investigator, I may be allowed to hope that it may one day become a regular survey of the Croatian adult population. Also, I have to thank to the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board of *Collegium Antropologicum* for the offer to present the results in this supplement of *Collegium Antropologicum*.

*Silvije Vuletić and Ozren Polašek*