

On the Occasion of Course Osteoporosis

Two main demographic features mark the world's development: the increase in the number of population, which is particularly true in the number of population, and the increase in the number of the elderly in developed countries. In the light of the fact that it is estimated that the proportion of the elderly population in such societies is likely to continue its growth, old age and aging have become a major social problem which raises many economic, social, psychological and health problems for an individual, population and society in its broadest sense. The full identification of these issues as well as their possible solutions are matters which have to be dealt with in the future. It seems justified to quote A. Sauvoy here: "Of all contemporary phenomena, the least controversial, the easiest to identify, the most unmistakable in its development, the simplest for long-term prognosis, and maybe the most severe consequences-wise is the phenomenon of aging of population. Despite all this, it seems that this phenomenon is the one we know least about."

Researches in the area of the protection of the elderly are relatively recent. They were launched after sporadic and individual interest and study of phenomena of old age and aging, either biological, clinical or psychological, turned into a systematic investigation into the problems of old age and aging of a population. (In this context, Europe's attribute "old" receives its true meaning). It is only logical that the similarity and the universal nature of the problem of the aging of population should lead to coordination of endeavors of various countries in this field.

Osteoporosis is one of the leading phenomena in elderly population. Although it is chiefly women's illness the recent studies show also high prevalence in men. It is presumed that 15 per cent of women in menopause have osteoporosis, and 30 per cent osteopenia – reduced mineral density of bone. Almost every second woman during her life time suffers the fracture as a consequence of osteoporosis (usually neck of femur, wrist and vertebra). The most severe consequence of femur fracture is mortality up to 20 per cent cases, 25 per cent require long-term home care and only 30 per cent restore former functions. The costs rise indisputably with the increase in the number of elderly population.

The Croatian medicine has recognized very early, almost step by step with the medicine of very developed countries of the world this problem of osteometabolic illness, that confirm research papers of dr. Škrabalo, Kostijal, Matković, Dekanić, Seidl, Škreb and Božikov.

At the turn of this millennium, on the occasion of the decade of the bones and joints this problem is made the center of our interest in prevention, detection and treatment of osteoporosis. The intention of this course of permanent upgrading in physical medicine and rehabilitation is to multidisciplinary comprehend the problem of osteoporosis and especially address the possibility of rehabilitation, thus improving the quality of *life of those ill*.

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