

Symposium “Sars-CoV-2 within the One Health concept”

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On 26th November 2020 a virtual symposium was held, entitled “Sars-CoV-2 within the One Health concept”, organized by the Committee of Animal and Comparative Pathology of the Department of Medical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU), with more than one hundred participants, and with the technical and organizational support of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb.

In this symposium, the organizers brought together and presented to the professional community the latest insights into the coronaviruses, with the primary emphasis on Sars-CoV-2, with reference to its zoonotic origin, and the importance and the role of the veterinary profession in the COVID-19 pandemic.

In line with the One Health initiative, which implies interdisciplinary and international cooperation, the lecturers were experts from the field of veterinary and human medicine, including guests from Slovenia and Serbia.

At the beginning of the symposium, the participants were welcomed by the Fellow of the Croatian Academy Vida Demarin, secretary of the Department of Medical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Fellow of the Croatian Academy Josip Madić, chairman of the Committee of Animal and Comparative Pathology, and also chairman of the Organizing Committee.

At the beginning of the working part of the symposium, the characteristics of the coronaviruses in mammals were presented by the Fellow of the Croatian Academy Josip Madić, and the characteristics of the same virus group in birds, as well as experience in the implementation of vaccination were shared with the participants by Assistant Professor Vladimir Savić, PhD, who works at the Croatian Veterinary Institute. After this, Professor Ljubo Barbić, PhD, from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb, and an associate member of HAZU, spoke about the zoonotic coronaviruses emergency.



Picture 1. The Fellow of the Croatian Academy Vida Demarin, Secretary of the Department of Medical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts and Josip Madić, chairman of the Committee of Animal and Comparative Pathology of the Department of Medical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

The symposium continued with a presentation of the basic characteristics of COVID-19 and the seroprevalence of the disease and experiences in diagnostics, by Assistant Professor Tatjana Vilibić Čavlek, PhD, and Irena Tabain, PhD, who work at the Croatian Institute of Public Health.

The characteristics of the pandemic and the work of the veterinary service in combating it in neighbouring states were presented by Tamaš Petrović, PhD, from the Scientific Institute in Novi Sad, Serbia, and Professor Ivan Toplak, PhD, from the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Ljubljana.

Assistant Professor Vladimir Stevanović, PhD, from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb presented the latest results of research into the role of pets in the epidemiology of COVID-19, and Dragan Brnić, PhD, from the Croatian Veterinary Institute gave an even wider picture of the pandemic by showing the results of research into the presence of the causative agent in wild animals and the environment.

The closing presentation on the current situation and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic was given by Professor Alemka Markotić, PhD, head of the University Hospital for Infectious Diseases “Dr. Fran Mihaljević”, and associate member of HAZU.

All these presentations aroused exceptional interest in the participants, and the open and full discussion shed further light on all aspects of the current knowledge about the present pandemic.

All participants in the symposium agreed that, regardless of the exceptional burden they are bearing in everyday life, the successful holding of this symposium was proof that the current situation is transient, and research, presentation of scientific truth, collegiality, and sincere cooperation are permanent values. This symposium is an excellent example and confirmation of the importance of multidisciplinary and international cooperation, two basic elements of the One Health approach. This approach is certainly necessary for us in facing the coronavirus pandemic, but also in future challenges in preserving the health of people and animals.



Picture 2. Assistant Professor Vladimir Savić during his presentation, professors Ljubo Barbić and Tatjana Vilibić Čavlek (standing), professor Vladimir Stevanović (sitting behind) and Josip Madić in the assembly-room of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb during the Online Symposium.