

## NEWS

### National Life Achievement Award for Science Granted to Academician Zvonko Kusić

On July 3, 2007, National Life Achievement Award for Science was presented to academician Zvonko Kusić at solemn ceremony held at the Croatian Parliament, in recognition of his overall scientific research in the field of biomedical sciences. The Award is presented by the Croatian Parliament on the occasion of the Croatian National Day to distinguished persons for their extraordinary scientific achievements. Academician Kusić was the only physician among this year's laureates.

Zvonko Kusić was born in 1946 in Zagreb. He is full member of the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts, secretary to its Department of Medical Sciences, and member of the Academy Presidency. He is a physician, specialist in nuclear medicine and in radiotherapy; head of the University Department of Oncology and Nuclear Medicine, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital; Professor of Oncology and Nuclear Medicine at Zagreb University School of Medicine; and Professor of Oncology at Zagreb University School of Dental Medicine.

He is member of the Council for Biomedical Sciences, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; National Health Council; Administrative Council of National Foundation for Science, Education and Technologic Development of Republic of Croatia; head of the Reference Center for Thyroid Diseases, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; and

president of the Croatian Thyroid Society.

Academician Kusić has acquired his professional and scientific training and visited as guest professor a number of prestigious medical institutions in the world, e.g., those in London, Ann Arbor, New York and Cincinnati. He attended University of London M.Sc. Course in Nuclear Medicine, postgraduate program of the American Thyroid Association New York, and Mayo Clinic Endocrine Course. He has contributed greatly to the development of his profession and education; he headed University Department of Oncology and Nuclear Medicine for 17 years; and has been active as full professor at Zagreb University School of Medicine for 15 years.

Along with his scientific and educational activities, he has also accomplished considerable organizational tasks. He held a number of responsible functions at Zagreb University School of Medicine, then the positions of dean and vice-dean, and director of Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital. In addition, he was president of the Regional Council for Biomedical Sciences of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; member

of the Administrative Council, University of Zagreb; and counselor to the minister of health.

Academician Kusić's field of professional and scientific interest is nuclear medicine and oncology, with special emphasis on the etiology, epidemiology, diagnosis, therapy and prevention of thyroid disease, where he has won high reputation in Cro-



atia and abroad.

Since 1999, Academician Kusić has been head of the Reference Center for Thyroid Diseases, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. He initiated the foundation and is president of the Croatian Thyroid Society since 2005, thus having significantly influenced the development of this particular field of medicine. Various specialties involved in the issue, including endocrinology, nuclear medicine, ENT, pathology, cytology, laboratory medicine, physiology, public health, etc., have now gathered for the first time to tackle the common issue of research and management of thyroid disease as one of the most common diseases in the population. Then he initiated publication of the Thyroid Society Newsletter, and in 2006 organized the First Scientific Symposium on Thyroid Disease, held at Croatian Academy of Science and Arts, where he proposed guidelines and algorithms for rational diagnosis of this entity. Like hardly anybody, he succeeded in linking clinical work and scientific research. His rich clinical experience acquired over more than thirty years in the diagnosis and treatment of thyroid disease has reflected in his scientific research and publications.

Most credit is due to Zvonko Kusić for eradication of iodine deficiency and goiter in Croatia, whereby Croatia joined the countries that have best resolved this major public health problem, in contrast to some industrialized countries such as Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, etc. With the eradication of goiter, some other disorders caused by iodine deficiency, psychomotor retardation in particular, have also been eliminated, which is of paramount importance for every population. On his proposal, Commission for Goiter Prevention and Iodine Prophylaxis Control was established in 1992, with Zvonko Kusić as president to the present. At the beginning of the 1990s, a national study of iodine deficiency and goiter epidemiology was launched and led by Zvonko Kusić. It was the first such study after 40 years of iodine prophylaxis. Kusić took active part in a number of international meetings addressing the issue as a representative of Croatia and invited lecturer.

The real break-through was Zvonko Kusić's initiative in 1996, based on the results of his own studies that pointed to persisting iodine deficiency and mild to moderate goiter in school children, for modification of

the by-law on table salt iodination. The results of subsequent studies conducted after 2002 throughout Croatia showed that there was no iodine deficiency and goiter in children anymore. Today, Croatia has been internationally recognized as a country with an adequate iodine intake. The successful Croatian model was highlighted on several occasions at international conferences of the WHO, UNICEF and ICCIDD as an example of properly managed iodine prophylaxis to be followed by other countries.

Academician Kusić has published more than five hundred professional and scientific papers, a great deal of them indexed in tertiary publications and cited by other authors. He is author or editor to a number of scientific and professional books, encyclopedic editions and textbooks. He was principal investigator in 17 Croatian and 13 international scientific projects, and supervisor to 20 defended MS theses and doctoral dissertations. He was supervisor to the scientific work of many renowned scientists, now assistant professors and professors, heads of various organizational units. He held a number of invited lectures at international meetings, initiated foundation of three reference centers and one research institute, and took part in the foundation of two university chairs.

Since 1995, Zvonko Kusić has been engaged as Editor-in-Chief in the internationally indexed journal *Acta Clinica Croatica*, published in English; Deputy Editor of the Croatian oncologic journal *Libri oncologici*; member of the Editorial Board of the journal *The Thyroid Gland – Clinical and Experimental*; member of the Editorial Board of the Croatian League Against Cancer newsletter *Fighting Cancer*; and Editor-in-Chief of the *Croatian Thyroid Society Newsletter*.

He is member of a number of Croatian and international professional and scientific associations and representative of Croatia to the International Council for Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders.

He has been decorated by President of the Republic of Croatia with the Croatian Morning Star Order for his high scientific merits, National Gratitude Scroll and Croatian Triplet Order, and presented the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts Award for his extraordinary contribution in the field of medical sciences.

*Jure Murgić*

**7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Croatian Society of Ophthalmology with International Participation**  
**30<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Alps-Adria Society of Ophthalmologists**  
**Split, Croatia, May 3-5, 2007**

Seventh Congress of the Croatian Society of Ophthalmology with International Participation and 30<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Alps-Adria Society of Ophthalmologists took place on May 3-5, 2007 in Split, Croatia. The Congress was organized by the Croatian Society of Ophthalmology, Croatian Medical Association, under the auspices of Dr. Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia.

The main topic of the Congress was pediatric ophthalmology. Major issues in the field were presented by renowned Croatian and international experts. Traditional conference of ophthalmologists from the Alps-Adria Community, held at the same time and venue, aroused high professional interest with a number of meetings with colleagues from the neighboring countries. These were accompanied by attractive social events offering good opportunities for making new and reinforcing old friendships.

Upon opening ceremony, Professor Stipe Božić held honorary lecture entitled "The beauty of sight from mountain heights". The session of invited lecturers included renowned European ophthalmologists. Professor Brigit Lorenz from Germany, president of the European Pediatric Ophthalmology Society (EPOS) and head of Department of Pediatric Ophthalmology, Strabismology and Ophthalmologic Genetics, Regensburg University, held a comprehensive lecture on new possibilities in the diagnosis and treatment of premature retinopathy. The prospects offered by retinal implants were presented by Professor Michaela Velikay-Parel from Department of Ophthalmology, Vienna University. Professor Lovro Bojić, head of Department of Infectious and Degenerative Eye Diseases, Split University Hospital, held a lecture on medicamentous therapy for congenital glaucoma, and Professor Zdravko Mandić, head of University Department of Ophthalmology, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital, spoke about controversies in the treatment of congenital cataract.

Along with the main topic, sections dedicated to particular fields of ophthalmology were organized, i.e. on neuro-ophthalmology, contact lenses and refraction, or-

bit and oculoplastic surgery, cornea, uvea, retina, glaucoma and cataract.

One of the main topics elaborated in the section on pediatric ophthalmology were modifications of national guidelines on the screening and management of retinopathy in premature infants, presented by Dr. Jelena Petrinović-Dorešić. Other topics in this section included issues related to strabismus, congenital cataract, amblyopia, pediatric eye trauma, and retinoblastoma.

In other sections, reports on the latest advancements in the diagnosis and management of all these problems were presented. Also, clinical experience in the treatment of these problems was described, with emphasis on pediatric issues. Dr. Ksenija Čuruvija-Opačić as invited lecturer spoke about the use of contact lenses in children and along with Dr. Dean Šarić held a workshop on soft contact lens fitting. Professor Neda Stiglmeier as invited lecturer introduced the audience into the broad spectrum of congenital anomalies of the orbit and periocular region.

Current approach in the treatment and adoption of novel achievements in daily routine were presented by numerous Congress participants. Mention should be made of the initial experience with implantation of Ahmed drainage graft for glaucoma refractory to less invasive therapeutic options, presented by Head Doctor Katja Novak-Lauš, MD, or of new therapeutic options in the management of chalazion and blepharitis relapses by use of Botox, presented by Professor Renata Iveković. The latest experiences acquired in the world with posterior segment vitrectomy by 23-gauge needle were presented by Dr. Zoran Vatauvuk, who discussed the use of Avastin together with his colleagues Drs. Ratimir Lazić, Tanja Čaljkušić-Mance and Tomislav Jukić.

On the first Congress day, young authors presented their ideas and demonstrated their lecturing abilities through 19 posters. During gala dinner, awards were presented to those most successful among them. First prize including registration fee for participation in an international ophthalmology congress was awarded to Dr. Vlatka Potočnjak for the poster entitled "Optic coherence tomography as a screening method for diabetic macular edema".

The 30<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Alps-Adria Society of Ophthalmologists took place in parallel with the national congress, with lectures in all fields of ophthalmology held by Croatian ophthalmologists and their colleagues from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Italy and Hungary. The main lecture was delivered by Professor

Mihaly Vegh from Hungary, dealing with indications for contact lens fitting in children. Other eminent lecturers were Professor Erica Richtig, Professor Giuseppe Ravalico, and Assist. Professor Mojca Globočnik-Petrovič. Professor Zdravko Mandić presented initial Croatian experiences in the treatment of keratoconus by the method of cross-linking.

Abstracts of all papers from the two congresses have been published in the journal *Ophthalmologica Croatica*, issued in Zagreb. In addition, all papers presented at the last-year's Congress of the Croatian Society of Ophthalmology have now appeared in the *Acta Clinica Croatica Supplement*.

*Ivana Bednar*

### **International Postgraduate Course: 18<sup>th</sup> Summer Stroke School Healthy Lifestyle and Prevention of Stroke Dubrovnik, Croatia, June 4-9, 2007**

The Course was organized by Inter-University Center Dubrovnik, Croatian Stroke Society, Croatian Society for Neurovascular Disorders, Croatian Medical Association, Academy of Medical Sciences of Croatia, School of Medicine, University of Zagreb.

This year we celebrated Healthy Lifestyle's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday! The International Postgraduate Course: Healthy Lifestyle and Prevention of Stroke is now legally an adult. The course was traditionally hosted by Dubrovnik's Inter-University Center. A great contribution to this Course was given by its directors who are eminent professionals in the field of stroke throughout the world: Professor Vida Demarin, University of Zagreb, Croatia; Professor Roman Haberl, University of Munich, Germany; Professor Kurt Niederkorn, University of Graz, Austria; Professor Tanja Rundek, Columbia University, New York, NY, USA; and Professor Zlatko Trkanjec, University of Zagreb, Croatia. These eminent neurologists participated in forming a pleasant and supportive learning environment for many young professionals from all over Europe. More than 30 participants from different parts of Croatia, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina attended the Course.

Professor Demarin opened the Course by presenting the activities that had taken place during the past year. Opening remarks were followed by a lecture on the history of medicine in Dubrovnik, cognitive impairments, incidence of stroke and TIA in Croatia, secondary stroke prevention, and presentation of some ongoing studies in Croatia and worldwide.

On Tuesday and Friday, we were honored by lectures given by Rune Aaslid, the man who invented the appli-

cation of transcranial Doppler technique, thus having forever changed the course of diagnostics and therapy of intracranial pathology. On Tuesday, he presented us with an intelligent use of transcranial Doppler in clinical practice, and on Friday we had an opportunity to hear how to get our scientific papers written and published. His lectures were interesting and inspiring for all of us.

Otherwise, day two was dedicated to diagnostics. We talked about new technologies in diagnostic ultrasound, noninvasive assessments of vascular changes in cognitive disorders and neuroimaging diagnosis of acute stroke and modern radiological approach to stroke.

Wednesday was all about practical work, communication and participating in workshops on stroke diagnosis and treatment. Several other workshops took place during the week, with emphasis put on the management of stroke risk factors and improvement of stroke outcome. Each day we also discussed some interesting stroke cases.

On Thursday we discussed stress as a risk factor for stroke, readiness for thrombolysis in certain regions of Croatia, pathophysiology and therapeutic targets in intracerebral hemorrhage, blood glucosae in acute stroke, and music in functional TCD sonography.

Friday, our last day of the Course and of sunny Dubrovnik, was about different subjects in neurology, such as writing a scientific paper, cerebrovascular diseases in seafarers, and migraine and vertigo.

The Course was concluded by a Round Table on the consensus on stroke management, closing remarks and evaluation of the Course.

Several social events enriched the Course, a welcome party, gala dinner and a beautiful concert at Rector's Palace.

The course encouraged cooperation, knowledge and experience exchange among participants. We all had great fun attending it!

*Sandra Morović*