

From the History of Croatian Dentistry: 100th Anniversary of the Birth of Professor Šime Kordić (1909–1984)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to pay tribute to the memory of extraordinary Croatian Professor of children's and preventive dentistry Šime Kordić on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth. The biography and work of this scientist and teacher were presented, as well as his researches about the history of dentistry and medicine in our coastal cities. On the bases of his published papers, we analyzed a significant role of Professor Šime Kordić for the development of dental medicine and promotion of health culture in Croatia.

Key words: history of dentistry, children's and preventive dentistry, Professor Šime Kordić, 20th century, Croatia

Introduction

Professor Šime Kordić played an important role as a great scientist and outstanding teacher in the history of Croatian dentistry (Figure 1). On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth, we presented the biographical data and work of this eminent expert of our dental medicine.

Biography

Šime Kordić was born on September 20, 1909 in the city of Komiza, situated on the island of Vis in Southern Croatia. After finishing primary school in his hometown, Classical High School in Split (1928), and medical study in Belgrade (1935), he worked several years as a municipal and private physician in Komiza¹. In 1940, he finished specialization in dental and oral diseases at the School of Medicine, University of Zagreb²⁻⁴.

Between 1941 and 1953, Dr Šime Kordić lived in Slavonski Brod¹. During World War II, he worked in the dental service of School Polyclinic^{5,6}, as well as a private specialist in this city¹, and later, by the end of the 1945, he became a doctor in the Dental Ambulance of District Health Station⁷. It is important to accentuate that Dr Šime Kordić was the organizer of dental service in the

city and district of Slavonski Brod¹. In 1949, Dental Ambulance of City-District Health Station was connected with the Ambulance of Social Insurance into the Central Dental Ambulance, which provided professional assistance in dentistry to the patients, insured persons, and other citizens. During the specified year, 11,635 patients were examined, and 3,800 systematic reviews of school children were realized⁷.

Dr Šime Kordić administrated with dental service in Slavonski Brod till 1953, when he moved to Split. In this city, he started to work as a head of Central Dental Station¹ in the Community Health Center between August 1, 1953 and May 3, 1962⁸. From 1957 to 1960, he was also an employee of the Hygiene Institute in Split⁹ as a manager of dental protection service for the school children and youth, with the special emphasis on the organization and supervision of preventive work in the dental institutions in Dalmatia¹. Furthermore, he was elected for the director and professor of the Higher School of Dental Medicine in Split between December 1, 1961 and December 31, 1971^{1,10}, and then, until his retirement in 1978, he was director of the Polyclinic for Dental and Oral Protection in this city⁴. He died in Split on May 18, 1984.



Fig. 1. Professor Šime Kordić.

Scientific and Professional Work

On the basis of the habilitation thesis »Contribution to the epidemiology of dental caries in middle Dalmatia«, Dr Šime Kordić became an assistant professor of the subject Children's and Preventive Dentistry at the School of Dental Medicine University of Zagreb on December 10, 1965¹, and after several years of successful work, he was promoted to the associate professor of this institution on June 6, 1974^{1,11}. Next year he defended his dissertation »Frequency of dental caries and some developmental irregularities in premature babies, with special review on mentally and physically handicapped children« at the School of Medicine, University of Rijeka^{1,12}.

In academic year 1975/1976, Professor Šime Kordić became a teacher of the Dental Medicine with Maxillo-facial Surgery at the School of Medicine University of Zagreb-Split Branch¹³.

For many years, he participated as a lecturer in the postgraduate study at the Split Branch of the »Dr Andrija Štampar« School of Public Health in Zagreb^{3,14}.

Professor Šime Kordić dedicated the greatest part of his working life to writing of numerous scientific and professional papers which represented his contribution to the promotion of dental medicine in Croatia, especially children's and preventive dentistry.

On the bases of results of the systematic reviews of school children in middle Dalmatia, he accentuated the necessity of treatment of the dental caries and malocclusions, as well as the importance of their preventive^{15–18}. He analyzed the frequency of circular caries of deciduous teeth¹⁹, discoloration and hypoplasia of children's teeth after treatment with tetracycline²⁰ and care of traumatic injuries of frontal teeth in children^{21,22}. In addition, he

described the cases of partial anodontia of hereditary etiology²³ and Ellis-van Crevelde syndrome²⁴.

Professor Šime Kordić was particularly impressed by the dental treatment of mentally and physically handicapped children^{25–28} and significance of prematurity in children's dentistry, which was the subject of his dissertation^{29–31}.

Furthermore, he presented the most frequent tumors in oral cavity³², difficulties in application of local anesthesia and teeth extractions in children³³ and treatment of impacted teeth^{34,35}.

As a practitioner and lecturer, he also discussed about the organization and promotion of dental health service^{16,36–38} and education in Croatia^{10,39,40}.

Historian of Dentistry and Medicine

During his life, Professor Šime Kordić was not only a leading professional and teacher but also a researcher of historical sources about the development of dental medicine in Croatian coastal cities.

On the bases of the archival documents from the end of the 18th century, he presented Gaetano Pierini, a surgeon dentist (*chirurgo-dentista*) from Italy, as the first professional dental doctor in the Republic of Dubrovnik⁴¹. Furthermore, Professor Šime Kordić described the dental health conditions in Dubrovnik during 19th century^{42,43}, as well as the work of several eminent representatives of dental medicine who were born in this city such as Mato Gjivović (1839–1927)⁴³, Frano Dabrović (1843–1897)^{43–45}, and Niko Gjivović (1866–1933)^{43,46}. He also accentuated importance of Ivo Stjepović (1867–1934) who graduated in two dental faculties and run the dental service in Dubrovnik with his uncle Frano Dabrović^{43,44}, Josip Maria Veža (1855–1936) who completed the Dental Faculty in Baltimore and resided in Split in 1897⁴⁷, and Vojtjeh Brida (1875–1954), a municipal physician in Brač, Pelješac and Hvar, and the first permanent dental therapist on the islands of middle Dalmatia^{48,49}.

Special attention of Professor Šime Kordić was directed to the humanity and devotion of Dalmatian physicians in the second half of 19th century who died as victims of their profession, mostly from contagious diseases^{50,51}.

In addition, he specified patron saints of health in old Trogir⁵² and described the iconographic presentations of St Apollonia, patroness saint of dental profession, in various Dalmatian churches^{53,54}.

Studying the archival material related to medicine, he also pointed to the medieval health connections between Dubrovnik and Bosnia⁵⁵.

Discussion and Conclusion

Professor Šime Kordić occupied a very prominent place in the history of Croatian dentistry on the one hand as an organizer and promoter of dental health service and on the other as a historian of this profession.

His articles of dental medicine were published in various journals such as »Zdravstvene novine«, »Obavještenja«, and »Acta Stomatologica Croatica«, as well as in the books of proceedings of Dental Medicine Symposiums held in Split and Dental Medicine Days of Croatia held in Zagreb, in which he also participated as a member of their organizational committees.

During the celebration of the anniversary of high educational institutions in Split on October 24, 1970, he was

a member of its honorary committee and author of two articles about the development of dental education in Split^{10,40}. He was also a collaborator of the editors and authors of the book »Development of the Medical Study in Dalmatia« published in 1984¹³.

With his original contributions, Professor Šime Kordić established himself as an eminent representative of Croatian dental medicine.

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IZ POVIJESTI HRVATSKE STOMATOLOGIJE: 100 OBLJETNICA ROĐENJA PROFESORA ŠIME KORDIĆA (1909–1984)

S A Ž E T A K

Cilj ovog rada bio je odati počast sjećanju na istaknutog hrvatskog profesora dječje i preventivne stomatologije Šimu Kordića povodom 100 obljetnice njegova rođenja. Prezentirani su biografija i rad ovog znanstvenika i nastavnika kao i njegova istraživanja o povijesti stomatologije i medicine u našim primorskim gradovima. Na osnovu njegovih publiciranih radova analizirana je znakovita uloga profesora Šime Kordića u razvoju stomatologije i promociji zdravstvene kulture u Hrvatskoj.