

Croatian Psychodermatology on International Erudition September 25-28, 2008, Zagreb, Croatia

The 2nd Croatian Congress of Psychodermatology with International Participation was held in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, organized by University Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital, under the auspices of the Croatian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Croatian Dermatovenerological Society of the Croatian Medical Association and European Society of Dermatology and Psychiatry.

The Congress was dedicated to and promoted the interdisciplinary approach in psychodermatology. Psychodermatology is focused on the boundary between dermatology, psychology and psychiatry. There are three main categories of psychodermatological disorders. Psychophysiological disorders are skin conditions that can be triggered or exacerbated by emotional states such as stress. Primary psychiatric disorders include psychiatric conditions that result in self-induced cutaneous manifestations such as trichotillomania and delusion of parasitosis. Secondary psychological or psychiatric problems are associated with disfiguring skin disorders. Disfigurement results in psychological problems such as decreased self-esteem, depression or social phobia.

This Congress emphasized the importance of collaborative team approach of experts in different fields in recognizing and helping patients with skin diseases. The program of the Congress was divided into eight main sessions: Psychodermatology, Psychoneuroimmunology in dermatology, Research in dermatology, Imperative of beauty, Psychotropic drugs and psychotherapy in dermatology, Psychological aspects of dermatological disorders, Psychological aspects of STDs, and Cutaneous associations of psychiatric disorders and self-inflicted dermatoses.

The Congress gathered many experts in the field of psychodermatology from Croatia and abroad. We were happy to welcome dermatologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, general practitioners, immunologists and school medicine experts. There were around 150 participants from nine European countries, including many leading scientists in the field. Dennis Linder from Italy, Secretary General of the European Society of Derma-

tology and Psychiatry, discussed the importance of research in psychodermatology and its influence on clinical work. Professor John Weinman, psychologist from St. Thomas and Guy's Hospital in London, gave an outstanding lecture about the influence of psychological stress on the process of wound healing. Professor Linda Papadopoulos, health psychologist from London Metropolitan University, talked about the maladaptive schemes in dermatology patients and discussed the possible therapy options. Our guest from Poland, Professor Jacek Szepietowski gave two interesting lectures: one on the role of neuropeptides in psoriatic pruritus and the other on the importance of the quality of life in dermatologic patients. It is also important to mention some of the Croatian presenters with outstanding lectures: Professor Danijel Buljan, psychiatrist, gave a very interesting and systematic overview of the use of psychotropic drugs in dermatology, and there was an extremely successful session on cutaneous associations of psychiatric disorders moderated by our colleagues Professors Aleksandra Basta-Juzbašić and Mihael Skerlev from University Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Zagreb University Hospital Center. There were also many colleagues from Rijeka University Hospital Center and Osijek University Hospital, and we appreciate their great contribution to our Congress. Especially interesting and lively was the Balint Group Workshop moderated by Dr. Vedran Bilić. Eight interesting posters were presented in Poster Section.

This Congress was enriched by another important event; opening ceremony was followed by promotion of the university textbook entitled Psychodermatology (*Psihodermatologija*), by Danijel Buljan, Mirna Šitum, Marija Buljan and Maja Vurnek-Živković. The textbook was presented by Professor Franjo Gruber and Asst. Professor Krunoslav Matešić as reviewers. This textbook is as important as the Congress for the development of the field of psychodermatology, and we hope that it will encourage many other colleagues to enter this interesting and important new field.

Maja Vurnek, BA, MS
Professor Mirna Šitum, MD, PhD

Some Thoughts on the Course on Laser Therapy of Vascular and Pigmented Lesions

The Course on Laser Therapy of Vascular and Pigmented Lesions took place on October 3, 2008 at University Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Zagreb University Hospital Center and School of Medicine. The Course included basic presentations in the first part and workshop on vascular Nd:YVO4 532nm laser and Q-switched ruby 694nm laser application in the second part. Twenty-five participants attended the Course and ten of them attended the Workshop. The participants were specialists and residents in dermatology and venereology, surgery and ENT. The lecturers were dermatologists from our Department who have due experience in the field. The main topics were indications for the application of vascular and pigment-specific lasers, with the accent on own results with diode pumped frequency-doubled solid state (Nd:YVO4) 532nm laser and Q-switched ruby 694nm laser. There was great interest in discussion on laser therapy of pigmented lesions concerning proper selection of indications and response to treatment. One of the lectures discussed the role of dermoscopy prior to laser removal of pigmented lesions. The protocol of appropriate post-treatment care and the rules on laser safety were also discussed. The analysis of final poll showed that the participants evaluated the lectures and the workshop with best marks. They also considered the annual courses on this segment of dermatology to be necessary and useful.

The Center for Laser Therapy in Cosmetic Dermatology was established at our Department six

years ago. Almost all indications in cutaneous laser surgery have been treated since then using five different laser systems: diode pumped frequency-doubled solid state (Nd:YVO4) laser with a wavelength of 532 nm, carbon dioxide 10600nm laser, Erbium:YAG 2940nm laser, Q-switched ruby 694nm laser and pulsed diode 810nm laser. As the only university center in the region, since 2006 we have been traditionally organizing annual courses and workshops on laser therapy in dermatology that take place in October. Our colleagues, either beginners or already experienced in the field, have shown considerable interest in these courses. These meetings provide an excellent opportunity for exchange of experiences and to discuss some controversies, especially from the point of view of different specialties. The next course will be organized at our Department on October 2, 2009, to give an overview of different indications for laser therapy.

Laser therapy in dermatology has been rapidly developing during the past few decades owing to scientific and technologic progress. These procedures should be carried out only by specially trained dermatologists with valid certificates issued by the authorities in the field. Nowadays, when we witness various cosmetic procedures (including laser therapy) being performed by beauticians, medical experts should continually emphasize this serious problem not only in Croatia but in other countries as well.

Zrinka Bukvić-Mokos, MD, PhD
Professor Jasna Lipozenčić, MD, PhD

Attention on Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures

Nowadays, when skin aging is perceived as a sign of overall aging, we are witnessing great increase in the number of individuals who visit dermatologists, hoping to reverse the signs of aging.

Cosmetic medicine has been rapidly advancing for the past few decades. A variety of anti-aging products and medical interventions have been developed to improve the individual's appearance.

Since 1997, the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) has been announcing statistics on surgical and non-surgical procedures in the USA. In 2006, approximately 11.5 million cosmetic procedures have been performed in the USA, which was a fourfold increase in comparison to 1996. Among non-surgical procedures, the most common ones in 2006 were botulinum toxin injections (3,181,592), hyaluronic acid (HA) fillers (1,593,554), laser hair removal (1,475,296), dermabrasion (993,071) and laser resurfacing (556,172).

Face remodeling with silicon oil, a non-biodegradable skin implant, was performed since the 1950s and outlawed in 1991. It was substituted by bovine collagen in 1981, which was associated with the risk of immune reaction to foreign proteins. Therefore, the skin hypersensitivity test had to be performed before this procedure. Ten years later, Hylan B, a derivative, was introduced in Germany, followed by the development of new HA fillers. They are especially used as fillings of wrinkles, atrophic scars, glossy skin defects, rejuvenation (mesolift, mesotherapy), and for face remodeling (augmentation of the lips, zygomatic arch, chin and nose). Nowadays, monophasic HA filler has been considered as safe and effective as biphasic filler, and the choice depends on the individual's skin characteristics. Today, HA fillers rank second on the list of top rejuvenation procedures, immediately after botulinum toxin injections.

Recent studies have shown the effectiveness of HA fillers in 83% of persons below age 50 and in 79% persons above this age. Nine months after the procedure, the effect was stable in 66% of individuals. According to some studies, monophasic HA filler produced better effect rate six months after the injection compared with biphasic HA filler and collagen injections. Nasolabial folds are one of the most common indications for HA fillers. The immediate efficiency of monophasic HA treatment was up to 100%, and six months later it was 99%.

Combinations of different non-surgical procedures are often used to obtain better therapeutic result. For example, a combination of HA filler and botulinum toxin (BTX-A) proved better efficiency than monotherapy in the management of perioral wrinkles, marionette wrinkles, and upper face and chin wrinkles.

Finally, an increasing demand for rejuvenation procedures has raised figures of unrealistic expectations. The role of experienced dermatologist is to critically evaluate all available non-surgical procedures and to perform them for proper indications. One of the most important preconditions for the good effect of all cosmetic interventions is close cooperation between the physician and the patient.

Professor Jasna Lipozenčić, MD, PhD
Zrinka Bukvić Mokos, MD, PhD

The First Croatian World Psoriasis Day

A holistic psoriasis program was organized for the first time as a psoriasis event in Croatia. On October 29, 2008, Croatian dermatovenereologists celebrated the World Psoriasis Day in different parts of Croatia, i.e. in Zagreb, Rijeka and Veli Lošinj. The Rijeka Branch of the Croatian Society of Dermatology and Venereology celebrated it in the island and town of Veli Lošinj (Hospital for Psoriatics) and organized the Symposium on the issue. The Referral Center for Psoriasis of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare at Rijeka University Department of Dermatology and Venereology organized the Day of Open Door, conducted by a team consisting of a dermatologist, psychologist and rheumatologist from 8.00 a.m. to

7.00 p.m., who examined all psoriatics that presented for consultation. At University Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Zagreb University Hospital Center, the World Psoriasis Day was celebrated at the Referral Center for Photodermatology of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, daily visited by approximately 30 of psoriatics for therapy. Some 20 inpatients were presented small gifts donated by Belupo and Merck Serono, and a letter of support from their medical team. The 4th Croatian-Italian Symposium on Psoriasis, held on November 13, 2008, was dedicated to the World Psoriasis Day.

Aida Pašić, MD, PhD

14th Alpe-Danube-Adria Symposium on Sexually Transmitted Infections of the Skin

The 14th Alpe-Danube-Adria Symposium on Sexually Transmitted Infections of the Skin, successfully organized by Croatian representatives in the Alpe-Danube-Adria (ADA) Society, was held at Hotel Westin, Zagreb, Croatia, November 14-15, 2008, with active participation of Professor Joseph Söltz-Szöts (Vienna, Austria) and Professor Aleksej Kansky (Ljubljana, Slovenia), the founders of the Association. Professor Derek Freedman from Dublin, Ireland, expert in the field of STIs, also took active part in the Symposium.

The meeting offered an opportunity for exchange of the knowledge and experience in the field of STIs. The program was so designed to present the state-of-the-art on all related issues, from bacterial infections through HIV/AIDS, HPV genital infections and miscellaneous in STIs to current therapeutic options. It was the 14th Symposium that has been traditionally organized by

eight countries from the Alpe-Danube-Adria region, indicating close professional collaboration among these countries in the field of STIs. This time, Croatia was organizer of the Symposium for the second time in 14 years of the existence of the ADA Association for STDIs.

For the first time, the psychological aspect of anogenital warts was discussed, along with other topics, i.e. update on the PAEDIMED project; high school education of adolescent population; and session on the history of STIs and HPV genital infections including prevention with HPV vaccine.

The next 15th Symposium will be held in Kosice, Slovakia, on November 20-21, 2009.

Professor Jasna Lipozenčić, MD, PhD
Assoc. Professor Mihael Skerlev, MD, PhD
Assist. Professor Branka Marinović, MD, PhD



Professors Kansky and Söltz-Szöts, founders of ADA STDI Society.