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INTRODUCTION

The 20th century could be considered the century of vaccines and vaccinology. In view of the topic of this issue, it should be reemphasized that the goal of vaccine application is preventive immunization. However, this is only one approach, though a most important one, as attempts are being made to develop vaccines to help cure chronic infections and noninfectious human diseases, such as cancers and autoimmune disorders, as opposed to preventing disease.

For us in Croatia the 2012 marks the 95th birthday of Drago Ikić, full member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. This landmark we celebrate by a series of articles that comprise part of the vaccination history and current vaccination coverage in Croatia, but it is also a time for some reflections on Drago Ikić professional life and accomplishments. While moving forward over the years to fulfil these tasks, we need to ask ourselves how far we have progressed in meeting the above mentioned goal. Are we benefiting the millions of children worldwide through our various activities? More than ever, to make this goal a reality we need to increase education and capacity building and provide necessary information in our speciality at a national as well as the global level.

With this very purpose in mind as a guest editor of this issue I have worked to put together a report on the state of the content ranging from classic childhood vaccines and immunizations, therapeutic vaccines and adult childhood vaccination to design and development of novel vaccines. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Goran Tešović, Bernard Kaić, Alenka Gagro, Magdalena Grce, Ivan Sabol, Nina Milutin Gašperov, Stanimir Vuk-Pavlović, Stipan Jonjić, Faruk Skenderi, Sabina Rabatić, Krešo Bendelja and Maja Šantak who are encouraged to collaborate in this effort to highlight the complexity and significance of vaccines and vaccinology, provide information about the increasing prevalence and burden of infectious diseases, and explain the need for ongoing vaccine development.