

Sestre milosrdnice



University Hospital

HISTORICAL REVIEW

This year, our University Department of Pediatrics celebrates 110th anniversary of its foundation, with its interesting history witnessing close relationship with the development of our Hospital and of pediatrics as a profession in Croatia.

The foundation of the first pediatric department at our Hospital in 1904 marked the beginning of organized care of infants, toddlers, preschool children and schoolchildren. Two years later, in 1906, the Act on Healthcare was proposed and enacted by the Croatian Parliament; among other provisions, Article 7 containing 14 paragraphs regulated children's health care and protection. The first organized hospital children's health care was led by our pediatrician, Dr Radovan Marković, who was the first pediatrician in Croatia¹. He served residency in pediatrics at St. Anne

Children's Hospital in Vienna as the third children's hospital in the world. Dr Marković wrote the first, very popular book on children's care, *Dječja njega – upute mladoj majci* (Children's Care – Instructions for Young Mothers), printed in 1903. He was editor of *Liječnički vjesnik*, Health Commissioner, and Member of Croatian Parliament during the 1906-1918 period. Dr Marković's engagement in all these activities had one and the same objective – efficient children's health care; therefore, he continuously asked for new workplaces for pediatricians and school medicine specialists, along with establishment of dairy kitchens. In 1910, he proposed a new Act on Healthcare Service. From the foundation of our Department of Pediatrics until 1924, children affected with infectious diseases were also hospitalized and treated at the



Opening of the Preterm Neonatal Unit at Department of Pediatrics in 1954. From left to right: M. Krsnik, V. Holjevac (Zagreb mayor) and G. Jungwirth, the then head of the Department, showing the newly acquired incubators.

Department because the then Hospital for Infectious Diseases established a special ward for children with infectious diseases only in 1924. After Dr Marković's death in 1920, the Department was headed by Dr Ljudevit Kobali until 1940, when he was succeeded by Dr Darinka Čepulić-Bičan from the first generation of students of the Zagreb School of Medicine. It should be noted that she was the first female head of department at our Hospital, although women doctors, Milana Gavrančić and Katinka Jakšić, had been working at our pediatric department from 1915. Our Department of Pediatrics was continuously improved and developed in spite of wars and crises; in 1954, the unit for premature infants was established and the first incubators in Croatia were purchased. It was just sixty years ago, a very important event not only for our Hospital but also for the development of pediatrics and children's health care in Croatia. We have written about our University Department of Pediatrics on several occasions^{2,3}, on the 100th anniversary in particular, however, it seems reasonable to remind the readers of all those events, not only to prevent our

rich and interesting past to fall to oblivion, but also to show the young generations that investing all efforts in the treatment and care of children as our dearest and precious treasure shall never stop or stagger despite the difficulties and obstacles caused by wars and financial problems (or fire, unfortunately also experienced at our Hospital); just as Dr Radovan Marković said in his letter of appreciation to Dr Katinka Jakšić in 1918: "Please, do perform your profession according to your experienced and verified decisions now and in the future, so that our guild can successfully contribute to the Croatian national revival".

Tanja Sušec

References

1. SUŠEC T, OBERITER V. Radovan Marković. Iz povijesti pedijatrije. Jugosl Pedijatr 1991;34(Suppl 1):174-6. (in Croatian)
2. SUŠEC T. Historical review. Acta Clin Croat 2004;43:429.
3. HAJNŽIĆ TF, SUŠEC T. The hundredth anniversary of the University Department of Pediatrics, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital, Zagreb, Croatia. Acta Clin Croat 2005;44:359-66.