

Sestre milosrdnice



University Hospital

HISTORICAL REVIEW

Half a century has elapsed since the foundation of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Alcoholism and Other Addictions at our Hospital. The Center started working on April 1, 1964, which was followed by the establishment of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) clubs in the same year. We have already written about these highly relevant events for our alcoholology in our journal¹; however, more than a 50-year history is a respectable fact of importance for our Hospital as well as for our Clinical Department of Psychiatry, Alcoholism and Other Addictions. Establishment of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Alcoholism and Other Addictions and the AA clubs marked the beginning of a serious and professional approach to alcoholics, to offer appropriate treatment and assistance not only to the alcoholics but also to their families and the community where they live and work. Professor Vladimir Hudolin, the founder and head of the Center and of the Croatian alcoholology in general, was fully aware of the problem severity in historical and social sense. In his papers, he repeatedly stated that the problem was as old as the human civilization itself, being one of the social diseases involving a huge proportion of consumers all over the world, in particular due to the expanding alcohol industry; this implied that the ever growing number of alcoholics required new social and healthcare actions. Our Center had soon established international collaboration through international symposia on alcoholism. Papers from the Center were published as articles or handbooks from 1964, and from 1965 the journal entitled *Alkoholizam* was published in collaboration with the International Council on Alcohol and Addictions from Lausanne. In 1964, the *Al-klub*, the then Yugoslav journal dealing with the professional and social problems of AA clubs was launched in collaboration with the Association against Alcoholism. Professor

Vladimir Hudolin was the journal's Editor-in-Chief, with Assist. Professor Branko Lang, head of Department for Alcoholism, close coworker of Professor Hudolin and one of the authors and editors of the books presented in our section On Notable Books in Our History, as editor. Among their manifold activities, education of many physicians, social workers, psychologists, speech therapists, nurses and others was of special importance, so that the so-called Zagreb School of Alcoholology became famous not only in the then Yugoslavia but also abroad, Italy in particular. Despite all the activities and considerable improvement achieved, Professor Hudolin was quite realistic when speaking about the work and successes at the Second Symposium on Alcoholism, held on October 16-18, 1964: "However, it should be remembered that the problem of alcoholism has been present in the society since the beginning of alcoholic beverage manufacture. The psychology of the social use of alcohol drinks is so deeply rooted in the mind of modern man that normal social functioning is almost unconceivable without alcohol. Human element is of utmost importance and people re-education is a difficult task, requiring serious planning at long term, while not expecting fast and spectacular success"².

We do agree that these considerations and conclusions are still actual and unchanged even now, fifty years later.

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References

1. SUŠEC T. Historical review. *Acta Clin Croat* 2004;43:335.
2. HUDOLIN V. Organizacija naučnoistraživačkog rada na području alkoholizma. In: II. Simpozij o alkoholizmu. Centar za proučavanje i suzbijanje alkoholizma Opće bolnice "Dr Mladen Stojanović", Zagreb, October 16-18, 1964. *Anali Bolnice "Dr Mladen Stojanović"* 1965;4(3):196. (in Croatian)