

EDITORIAL: THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

In this year, our journal *Acta clinica Croatica* is celebrating its 40th anniversary, while the founder and publisher of the journal, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital, is celebrating its 155th anniversary. Juraj Haulik, serving as Bishop of Zagreb in those days, launched the initiative for establishment of the hospital, which was realized on January 1, 1846 at St. Vincent de Paul's Sisters of Charity Convent. In the beginning, the Hospital had only 12 beds. Thereafter, the Hospital moved on several occasions, and since 1893 it has been located at the present site in Vinogradska street 29. St. Vincent de Paul's Sisters of Charity bought the site of the former graveyard for the poor, and built the first Hospital buildings: eight pavilions for patients and a pavilion for nuns. The Hospital had central heating and gas lighting. The Austro-Hungarian Emperor Francis Joseph visited the Hospital during his stay in Zagreb in the early 1895. The records of the time confirm that he was impressed with the Hospital size and organization.

Try to take short consideration and imagine what the life was like in 1846 when the Hospital was founded. Although it was some more than a century and a half ago, it was a completely different world, looking from the present perspective. Most of our everyday things had not even been invented in those days.

So, there was no electricity, so that light was mostly obtained by torches, candles, gas and petroleum lamps. Cars had not yet been invented, and transportation was mainly performed by using horses or cattle. There were no telephones, no movies, no TV, no radio sets, no plastics, etc. Just a few newspapers were published.

Try to imagine how medicine was done in those days. In the 1840s, Long Crawford and William T.G. Morton introduced the use of ether gas in surgery, and there was heavy debate about the method value. In 1847, Ignaz Phillip Semmelweis discovered that unclean hands of medical students examining women upon anatomy sections could have been the cause of puerperal sepsis, stressing the need of cleanliness on childbirth. In 1850s, Rudolf Virchow pioneered in pathology. In the mid-1800s, Claude Bernard founded experimental physiology, and Florence Nightingale founded modern nursing profession. In the mid- to late

1800s, Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch proved that certain bacteria could cause certain diseases. In 1859, Charles Robert Darwin published his book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation by Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, shocking the people of the time and initiating a great debate about his hypotheses. In 1867, Joseph Lister published in *The Lancet* his paper on antiseptic methods in surgery; he also introduced catgut ligature in 1880. In 1866, Gregor Johann Mendel published results of his work on inheritance, but they proceeded unnoticed until the early 1900s. In 1895, Wilhelm Konrad Roentgen invented x-rays. In 1898, Marie and Pierre Curie discovered polonium and radium. Also, Sigmund Freud was born in 1856, and Albert Einstein in 1879.

Is there the need to say anything more? Try to imagine how it must have been to be a physician in the mid-1800s, making diagnoses, taking care and treating patients. From our today's point of view, it is almost unconceivable how little physicians could do in those days. Their knowledge and methods available may seem ridiculous to us now, but try to imagine a physician living in the year 2156 (i.e. 155 years ahead from the present time), looking at the medicine of today. Is it possible that this imaginary physician will have considered our present knowledge and some of our methods ridiculous?

However, the physicians of those past times were doing their best on treating patients, engaging all their knowledge, technology available, and first of all their high sense of dedication. They published in journals their discoveries, hypotheses, descriptions of diseases, and discussed their findings and observations at congresses, thus paving foundations of the today's medicine. Sometimes, their discoveries, conclusions, hypotheses and observations proved to be wrong, however, it is the unavoidable way of the scientific progress.

One hundred and sixteen years later, in 1962, the first issue of our journal *Acta clinica Croatica* was published. It was named *Anali bolnice "Dr. M. Stojanovic"* for the first 10 volumes, *Anali Kliničke bolnice "Dr. M. Stojanovic"* from 10th to 29th volume and this year the journal is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

Forty years ago, the world resembled the world of today to a considerably greater extent than the world of the mid-1800s: electricity, cars, telephones, movies, TV, radio, and plastics had already been invented and widely used in everyday life. Many things, though, had still been awaiting to be discovered. For example, there were no cellular phones, fax and photocopy devices, while the first satellite was launched in 1957, the first laser was constructed in 1960, computers were of an almost building-size, and there was no Internet. Most of pharmaceuticals used today had not yet been available or were at the very beginning of investigation; beta-blockers, calcium antagonists, H₂ antagonists, ACE inhibitors, quinolones and statins had not yet been invented, whereas most cytostatics were introduced in the 1960s, oral contraceptives in 1956, and first benzodiazepine in 1960. Smoking was even encouraged as a style of life. In those days, there were no computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, PET and SPECT, while the scintigraphic, endoscopic and ultrasonic methods were at their very beginnings. Most of the diagnostic and therapeutic options now widely used in daily practice were not available at the time the first issue of our journal was published. In fact, they have been invented and introduced in daily routine during the last forty years.

However, the physicians of the time also did their best, using all their knowledge, technology and dedication to the benefit of their patients. They published their discoveries, descriptions of diseases and other contributions in journals, and discussed their findings and observations at congresses, thus adding considerably to the progress of the medical sciences. Some of our colleagues began their careers in those days, witnessing the great progress the science and medicine have made in the last forty years.

In the last four decades, the overall knowledge of the mankind has rapidly grown. Recently, it has been estimated that the complete medical state-of-the-art changes approximately every five to ten years. Publications in various journals contribute to this ever-growing medical

knowledge. The scientific medical community exchange the knowledge, discoveries, observations and hypotheses through papers that appear in journals.

Acta clinica Croatica is one of the journals that have brought a huge number of papers over the last forty years, including original scientific papers, professional papers, review articles, case reports, conference presentations, comments, letters to the editor, news, etc. Also, topical supplements have appeared occasionally.

Our journal has probably provided quite a small contribution to the enormous progress of medicine during the last few decades. The editors believe that this contribution of our journal to the medical knowledge will continue and even improve in the years to come. With our dedicated authors and their valuable contributions to the journal, we believe that the share of our journal in this progress will grow significantly in the forthcoming period.

Many things have changed in the journal: since its 30th volume, its name has been changed (from *Anali Kliničke bolnice "Dr. M. Stojanović"* to *Acta clinica Croatica*); the graphic appearance of the journal has been modified; many renowned experts from various fields of medicine from all over the world have recently become members of the journal Editorial Council (it is our pleasure to introduce two new members of Editorial Council in this issue); and last year, in the eve of the journal jubilee, the electronic web edition of the journal has been designed. The editors have made great efforts to improve the journal appearance, however, the journal could not be issued without the valuable contribution from our authors. For forty years now, the authors have shown their commitment to publish their papers in *Acta clinica Croatica*, and we do believe that they will continue to submit their high-quality papers, thus to maintain and improve the journal quality.

The journal has passed a long way from its beginnings, witnessing the great progress in medicine in the last forty years. There is a long way to go in the future as well, however, even the longest journey begins with the first step.

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