

ON NOTABLE BOOKS IN OUR HISTORY

The book entitled *Kako brinuti o svojoj šećernoj bolesti* (How to Take Care of Your Diabetes), published in 1995 and edited by our endocrinologists Milan Vrkljan, Branka Vizner, Mladen Sekso and Tomislav Čabrijan, is not a book written by Croatian physicians but translation of a well-known and widely recognized book by American authors from the Virginia Mason Diabetes Center from Seattle, USA, entitled *Take Care of Your Diabetes*. In 1925, the Center initiated implementation of educational programs and in 1928 published the first publication, *Instructions for Diabetic Patients*. The publication that was translated by our physician Milan Vrkljan in 1995 was the 15th edition published by the Virginia Mason Diabetes Center, with Dr Robert S. Mecklenburg from Washington University, Seattle, USA, as Editor-in-Chief.

Why have I chosen this book to present it in this section? I have chosen it because the very idea of translating the book, our physicians' commentaries and incorporated data on the work of our diabetes department make it a significant publication in the history and development of our care for diabetic patients. Commentaries in the book have been written by nineteen physicians from our Hospital, including two cardiologists, one specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation, a nephrologist and a psychiatrist, along with a biochemist from Endocrinological Laboratory, a nurse and Clinical Department Head Nurse¹. This diversity of professions illustrates the whole complexity and extensiveness of the topic, while at the same time demonstrating that adjustment of diabetic patients to their disease and active treatment is highly demanding not only for patients but also for physicians, especially young physicians and general practitioners.

The book has 16 chapters and its 15th edition clearly demonstrates that these experienced authors show their readers in a simple but reliable manner how to cope with the disease and its management. The text is easy to understand by virtually every reader irrespective of the level of education; the more so, the last chapter contains a glossary of all terms related to dia-



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betes, which is also very simple and clear. All information on the history and development of the knowledge about diabetes is presented in short and simple sentences. What is in a way surprising even today is the very good organization of diabetic care at Virginia Mason Diabetes Center. We are aware that such a serious work requires considerable financial resources; however, it is quite obvious that this Center, American Diabetes Society, as well as other societies and organizations specifically devoted to the care of children, youth or elderly patients, and their good structure and interconnections actually make the basis of good work in the struggle against diabetes. Accordingly, good patient education, especially *via* appropriate reading, enables the patient take active role in his own treatment and responsibility for his own quality of life.

In the Croatian edition, in the commentary entitled *Oblici zaštite bolesnika sa šećernom bolešću u Hrvatskoj* (The Types of Diabetic Patient Care)², the authors emphasize the Vuk Vrhovac Clinic for Diabetes as the

largest Croatian institution performing follow up of diabetic patients, with a note that respective professionals from our Hospital have also organized not only treatment but also care and education of diabetic patients. This book tells it through commentaries written by our physicians. Twenty-one contributors from our Hospital have written commentaries on 16 book chapters in order to provide the readers, primarily diabetic patients, with due explanations to better understand the text and to clarify differences between the American and Croatian therapeutic possibilities, as well as differences and similarities in the attitudes towards diabetes. That is why we have accepted this book as in part witnessing our organization of patient education.

This book has yet another important feature, i.e. twenty years of the work on education should demonstrate that the way chosen has produced valuable results indeed, independently of the advances in scientific research. We do hope that these experiences have clarified how to help our patients with this serious disease. As Robert S. Mecklenburg, Editor-in-Chief of the book says: "... the textbook serves as a permanent experiment in patient education"³. In Croatia

there are more than 230,000 diabetic patients, with only 7.4% of them achieving the desired therapeutic outcome; therefore, we need new actions and books that will help diabetic patients but also physicians and all healthcare professionals involved in diabetes management. How to continue our work, how to develop and design novel therapeutic methods and help the patients achieve the favorable therapeutic outcome irrespective of age, level of education or economic status, all these are questions posed by this book and persisting to the present. We do hope that it will stimulate all those involved in diabetes care to think and take action.

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References

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2. Mecklenburg RS. Kako brinuti o svojoj šećernoj bolesti. First Croatian edition. Zagreb: Birotisak, 1995; p. 196. (in Croatian)
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