

5th Croatian Congress of psychodermatology

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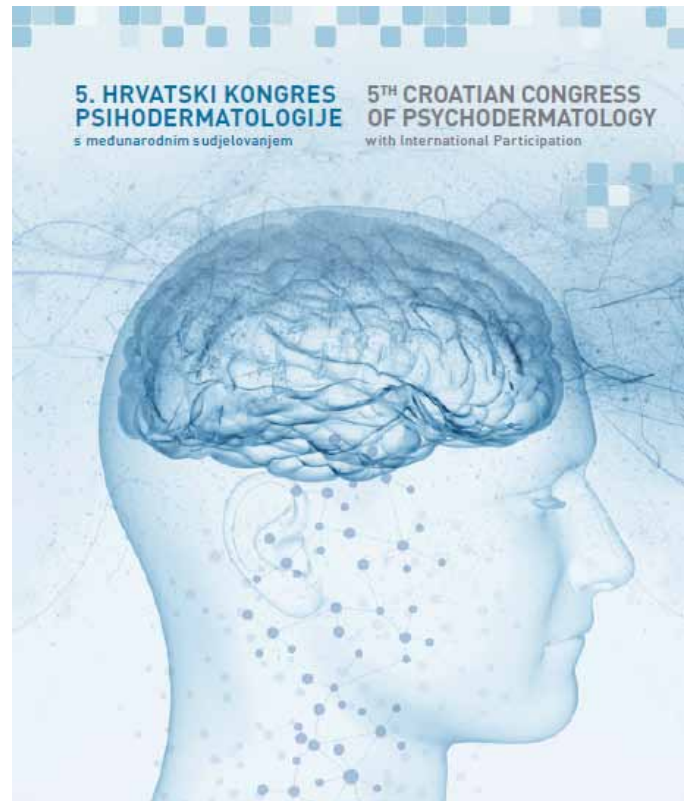
MIRNA ŠITUM

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The 5th Croatian Congress of Psychodermatology with International Participation was held from 2nd to 4th of September 2021 in virtual form, under the auspices of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts and organized by the Department of Dermatology and Venerology University Hospital Centre Sestre milosrdnice, Croatian Society of Dermatological Oncology of the Croatian Medical Association, and the Croatian Dermatovenerological Society of the Croatian Medical Association.

The Congress traditionally brings together dermatovenerologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other professionals with extensive experience and international reputation. It was opened by academician Mirna Šitum, president of the organizing committee, academician and plenary lecturer Vida Demarin, Professor Branka Marinović, and Helena Jerković, vice president of the organizing committee. The rich scientific program of the congress included four topics, namely the psychological status and quality of life of patients with chronic skin diseases, psychooncological aspects in patients with malignant skin tumours, psychological aspects in healthcare workers in times of coronavirus pandemic as well as diverse topics in psychodermatology. Altogether fifty oral, six poster presentations, two workshops and one round table were held and forty-six lecturers, including fourteen invited lecturers, attended it. Academician Vida Demarin gave a plenary lecture on epigenetic mechanisms and neuroplasticity, and Professor George Slavich, a pioneer in stress research spoke about the epigenetic mechanisms of social security.

Participants had the opportunity to learn about new insights into dermatovenerological diseases common in everyday clinical practice. The latter included quality of life and comorbid psychiatric disorders in patients suffering from chronic dermatoses such as atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, hidradenitis suppurativa, urticaria, and others. In this context, Professor Jacek Szepietowski, President of the European Society of Dermatology and Psychiatry (ESDaP) presented the latest findings on the psychosocial burden of atopic dermatitis, while Professor and former President of ESDaP, Lucia Thomas Aragonez spoke about the quality of life body image in patients with hidradenitis suppurativa. Professor Andrew Finlay, a person of the highest reputation in the world of psychodermatology, presented a relevant topic on the use of social networks in scientific research on the family quality of life during the coronavirus pandemic, and Professor Francesca Sampogna spoke about alexithymia in patients with scleroderma. Esteemed psychiatrists Petrona Brečić, Aleksandra Klobučar, Ika Rončević Gržeta and Igor Filipčić spoke about suicidality assessment, trichotillomania,



psychosocial aspects of the skin as an organ of communication, as well as the recognition and treatment of psychiatric diseases in dermatological patients.

Special emphasis in the congress program was placed on malignant skin tumors and melanoma along with its various psychooncological aspects. Esteemed psychologists Gordana Buljan Flander and Gorka Vuletić spoke about experiences of parents of children with malignant diseases due to the coronavirus pandemic, and generational differences in attitudes towards UV radiation. A special feature of this year's congress is the round table on congenital skin changes, which aimed to bring together experts of various profiles for a multidisciplinary presentation of the psychosocial burden that parents and children with congenital changes experience.

In addition to these always-important topics in psychodermatology, the program thematically covered the coronavirus pandemic and the challenges faced by health professionals and users. In this context, a significant part of the congress was focused on understanding the consequences of the pandemic, covering a wide range of topics, especially burnout and stress in healthcare professionals, but also patients and their quality of life. Professors Meri Tadinac

and Nataša Jokić Begić presented the relevant results of an extensive Croatian study on mental health in the pandemic, while Professor Pavel Chernyshov spoke about the relevant problem of hand dermatitis in health workers, and Professor Branka Marinović talked about burnout syndrome in dermatovenereology. Related to burnout, two practical workshops on mental health and stress reduction techniques were held, focusing on mindfulness and music therapy. Finally, a significant number of presentations were dedicated to various new topics in psychodermatology.

In conclusion, from the first Croatian Congress of Psychodermatology, which was held in 2004 until today, the Congress has continued to strengthen its visibility and follow modern knowledge and trends in psychodermatology. It is especially emphasized by the fact that it encourages the implementation of original scientific research and the cooperation of experts of various profiles, as well as the cooperation of various health and academic institutions in Croatia.