

# CROVASCULAR 2025 - 10th Croatian Vascular Day: A Decade of Advancing Vascular Medicine in Croatia

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*Figure 1. Prof. Kresimir Luetić, prof. Aleš Blinc, prof. Šekib Sokolović, prof. Diana Delić-Brkljačić, acad. Vida Demarin, prof. Mislav Vrsalović, acad. Zvonko Kusić, prof. Davor Vagić, prof. Miljenko Kovačević (from left to right) during 10th Croatian Symposium on Vascular Medicine - CROVASCULAR 2025.*

The 10th traditional scientific symposium dedicated to the field of vascular medicine, Croatian Vascular Day - CROVASCULAR 2025 was held on 14 February 2025, under the auspices of the Department of Medical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Sisters of Charity University Hospital Centre, the Croatian Cardiac Society, and the Croatian Society of Angiology of the Croatian Medical Association.

The symposium “CROVASCULAR - Croatian Vascular Day” was established in 2015 as a unique professional and scientific event in Croatia covering all aspects of vascular diseases. It was conceived as a space for interdisciplinary exchange, collaboration and education, bringing together cardiologists, vascular surgeons, angiologists, interventional radiologists, neurologists and general practitioners. Over the years, the event has developed into a highly respected scientific platform for the exchange of knowledge and clinical expertise in vascular medicine (angiology), promoting interdisciplinarity, teamwork and a holistic, evidence-based and personalised approach to the vascular patient. This foundation is crucial for professional and scientific progress, which ultimately

leads to the successful treatment of often underestimated vascular diseases. The symposium traditionally included faculty and clinicians from the medical schools of the Universities of Zagreb, Split, Rijeka and Osijek, the Catholic University of Croatia as well as Croatian clinical centres and clinical hospitals together with international guests.

The event is accredited by the Croatian Medical Chamber and remains free of registration fees in order to uphold the principle of open access to expertise and scientific knowledge in cardiovascular medicine.

At the forefront of this event is its founder and driving force Prof Mislav Vrsalović, a renowned figure in vascular medicine at national and European level. Prof Vrsalović, the president of the symposium’s organising committee, is an associate member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU), president of the Croatian Society of Angiology of the Croatian Medical Association, head of the Department of Vascular Diseases and Hypertension at the Cardiovascular Diseases Clinic of the Sisters of Charity University Hospital Centre and head of the Ministry of Health’s



Figure 2. Prof Vrsalović giving a talk at 10th Croatian Symposium on Vascular Medicine - CROVASCULAR 2025.

Referral Centre for Peripheral and Multisite Artery Disease. He is also active internationally, including as a board member of the European Society of Vascular Medicine (ESVM), as a nucleus member and treasurer of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) Working Group on Aorta and Peripheral Vascular Diseases, and as a national representative in the Division of Angiology of the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS). Prof Vrsalović is both a Fellow of the European Society of Cardiology (FESC) and a Fellow of the Society of Vascular Medicine (USA).

The aim of this year's event was to present a rational diagnostic approach and optimal treatment options for vascular diseases from an interdisciplinary perspective. The focus was on raising awareness of the high morbidity and mortality associated with vascular diseases, as well as the chronic nature and frequent recurrence of these conditions. The limited public knowledge about these diseases was also addressed. A core mission of CROVASCULAR remains the promotion of sound diagnostics, optimal treatment strategies and public involvement through healthcare professionals and the media.

The symposium was divided into four structured sessions: Angiology Highlights, ABC of Angiology, Vascular Puzzle and Vascular Dilemmas, in which uncertainties in the treatment of vascular patients were explored using case studies from clinical practise, all in the light of the latest European guidelines. The programme was rich in content and interdisciplinary in nature.

The lectures addressed the epidemiology of vascular diseases and non-traumatic limb amputations in Croatia, a rational clinical approach to peripheral and polyvascular arterial disease in the presence of comorbidities (diabetes, chronic kidney disease, heart

failure) and the prognostic role of carotid and femoral ultrasound in the assessment of cardiovascular risk. The modern methods of interventional endovascular treatment, including intravascular ultrasound, lithotripsy and rotablation in peripheral arterial disease, were also discussed. In collaboration with the Croatian Society for Vascular Surgery, topics on thoracic and abdominal aortic aneurysms, infectious aortitis and endovascular treatment of the aorta were discussed. Other presentations dealt with the epidemiology and risk stratification of pulmonary embolism, chronic venous insufficiency and the endovascular treatment of pulmonary embolism using mechanical thrombectomy in Croatian vascular centres. A large part of the event focused on complex cases and practical challenges in daily clinical practice. In the final block, "Vascular Dilemmas," complex clinical cases such as carotid artery dissection in pregnancy and the management of Paget-Schroetter disease were presented.

Vascular diseases are common in the general population and are associated with a high mortality rate. They tend to recur, are chronic, and are relatively little recognised by the public. Therefore, the aim of this tenth traditional vascular symposium was to increase awareness of these diseases in the medical community and subsequently, via healthcare professionals and the media, in the general population.

Over the past ten years, CROVASCULAR has become a nationally and regionally recognised event that combines clinical excellence with scientific innovation. The symposium has been instrumental in raising awareness of vascular diseases in Croatia, which despite their high morbidity and mortality are still under-recognised and under-treated. It supports a holistic and patient-centred approach and has played a key role in establishing standards of care, including the establishment of the first Croatian Peripheral Arterial Disease Registry (CRO-PAD) in 2010 at the Sisters of Charity University Hospital Centre. This prospective, single-centre database has contributed significantly in improving vascular outcomes and patient care (1-10).

Looking to the future, the success of the 10th edition of CROVASCULAR stands as a testament to the sustained commitment of the organisers and participants. Thanks to their vision and dedication, the symposium has become a vital part of the country's medical landscape, fostering innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration and improved patient outcomes. It not only reflects a decade of achievements in Croatian vascular medicine, but also sets the course for future progress and innovation in the field.

The symposium was officially opened with a welcoming speech by Acad. Vida Demarin, Secretary of the Department of Medical Sciences at HAZU, Prof Davor Vagić, Director of the Sisters of Charity University Hospital Centre, Asst. Prof Krešimir Luetić,



Figure 3. Croatian Symposia on Vascular Medicine CROVASCULAR 2015-2025.

President of the Croatian Medical Chamber, and Prof Diana Delić-Brkljačić, Vice President of the Croatian Cardiac Society. With enthusiasm building towards CROVASCULAR 2026 and beyond, this anniversary edition is both a celebration and a call for further progress and action to address and reduce the silent but deadly burden of vascular diseases in Croatia.

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