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The 11th Rheumatology Meeting entitled *"In the Embrace of Biological Therapy" — Treatment of Rheumatic Patients with Biological Therapy* was held in Opatija from 4th to 5th April 2025. The Meeting was organised by "*Thalassotherapia Opatija*", *Special Hospital for Medical Rehabilitation of Heart, Lung and Rheumatic Diseases* and the School of Medicine, University of Rijeka and it was held for the first time under the leadership of Prof. Gordana Laškarin, MD, PhD. Annual professional meetings covering selected topics in rheumatology have been held under the leadership of Prof. Tatjana Kehler, MD, PhD at the "*Thalassotherapia Opatija*" hospital since 2011 (with the exception of the period between 2020 and 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). These events have always been prominent and attended by specialists in Family Medicine from the Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Istria counties, who were the primary target audience for this Meeting. In addition to them, other attendees also included other experts who might deem some of the topics covered at these meetings beneficial and important in their everyday medical practice. The opening speech at this year's Meeting was given by Prof. Laškarin, MD, PhD, and all attendees were then greeted by the Head of the "*Thalassotherapia Opatija*" hospital, Prof. Viktor Peršić, MD, PhD who emphasised the importance of exchanging professional knowledge in the field of modern therapeutic approaches. During the two-day program, renowned experts from various medical specialties and centres in the Republic of Croatia presented the latest findings and experiences in the treatment of rheumatic patients using biological therapy. Prof. Laškarin, MD, PhD gave an introductory lecture on the topic of outlining the immune response in clinical manifestations of rheumatic diseases and pathogenesis of therapeutic intervention with biological drugs. This was followed by a group of lectures on the topic of life-threatening rheumatic diseases, which included systemic lupus erythematosus and interstitial lung diseases. Prof. Branimir Anić, MD, PhD, from the University Hospital Centre Zagreb, led the discussion on

U Opatiji je od 4. do 5. travnja 2025. održan 11. reumatološki skup pod naslovom „*U zagrljaju biološke terapije*" – *Liječenje reumatskog bolesnika biološkom terapijom* u organizaciji Specijalne bolnice za rehabilitaciju bolesti srca, pluća i reumatizma „Thalassotherapia – Opatija" i Medicinskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci i prvi put pod voditeljstvom prof. dr. sc. Gordane Laškarin. Naime, godišnji stručni skupovi s reumatološkim temama održavali su se u bolnici „Thalassotherapia – Opatija" od 2011. godine, s izuzetkom razdoblja od 2020. do 2023. godine zbog pandemije COVID-19, pod voditeljstvom prof. dr. sc. Tatjane Kehler i uvijek su bili zapaženi i posjećeni od strane liječnika specijalista obiteljske medicine Primorsko-goranske i Istarske županije, kojima je primarno skup bio namijenjen, ali i drugih stručnjaka kojima su teme skupa važne za svakodnevnu medicinsku praksu. Ovogodišnji skup je otvorila prof. dr. sc. Gordana Laškarin, a sve prisutne pozdravio je ravnatelj „Thalassotherapije – Opatija" prof. dr. sc. Viktor Peršić, koji je naglasio važnost razmjene stručnih znanja u području suvremenih terapijskih pristupa. Tijekom dvodnevnog programa renomirani stručnjaci iz različitih medicinskih disciplina i centara Republike Hrvatske iznosili su najnovije spoznaje i iskustva u liječenju reumatskih bolesnika primjenom biološke terapije. Prof. dr. sc. Laškarin održala je uvodno predavanje o ocrtavanju imunološke reakcije u kliničkim manifestacijama reumatskih bolesti i patogenetskim točkama terapijske intervencije biološkim lijekovima. Uslijedila je grupa predavanja na temu ugrožava li reumatska bolest život bolesnika, koja je obuhvaćala sustavni eritemski lupus i intersticijske bolesti pluća. Prof. dr. sc. Branimir Anić iz Kliničkoga bolničkog centra Zagreb predvodio je s temom o sustavnom eritemskom lupusu i naglasio značaj kvantifikacije fenotipa i procjene aktivnosti bolesti kao i nastalih oštećenja kod bolesnika te značaj pravovremenog i kontinuiranog liječenja. Prof. dr. sc. Viktor Peršić prikazao je komplikacije sustavnoga eritemskog lupusa na srcu s posebnim osvrtom na oštećenje koronarne mikrocirkulacije. Doc. dr. sc. Felina Anić iz Kliničkoga



Figure 1. Participants of the 11th Rheumatology Meeting entitled "In the Embrace of Biological Therapy"
Slika 1. Sudionici 11. reumatološkog skupa „U zagrljaju biološke terapije"

systemic lupus erythematosus and highlighted the importance of quantifying phenotypic information and assessing disease activity in addition to the damage caused in patients, as well as the importance of timely and continuous treatment. Prof. Viktor Peršić, MD, PhD presented the complications of systemic lupus erythematosus on the heart, with a special focus on coronary microvascular dysfunction. Asst. Prof. Felina Anić, MD, PhD from the University Hospital Centre Rijeka presented the topic of complexity of treating patients with lupus nephritis. Psychologist Damjan Dušević spoke about the contribution of psychological tests in diagnosing systemic lupus erythematosus. Melany Ćurić, a pulmonologist at the "*Thalassotherapia Opatija*" hospital gave a lecture on the topic of interstitial lung diseases, and Marija Rogoznica Pavlović, a rheumatologist, presented the course of the disease and the method of treating interstitial lung disease with biological therapy and antifibrotics in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. Prof. Simeon Grazio, MD, PhD from the Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital Centre in Zagreb held an overview lecture on the clinical manifestations and treatment options for spondyloarthritis with biological drugs. Endocrinological complications in rheumatic patients were highlighted by Prof. Tatjana Kehler, MD, PhD with topics such as autoimmune thyroid disease, osteoporosis and obesity. This was followed by selected topics from recent scientific research conducted by employees and associates of the "*Thalassotherapia Opatija*" hospital. Prof. Tamara Turk-Wensveen, MD, PhD presented results on the impact of diabetes on inflammation, and Iva Uravić Bursać, MD, PhD presented results on the impact of metabolic syndrome on diastolic function in psoriatic

bolničkog centra Rijeka prikazala je složenost liječenja bolesnika s lupusom nefritisom. Psiholog Damjan Dušević govorio je o doprinosu psiholoških testova u postavljanju dijagnoze sustavnoga eritemskog lupusa. Djelatnica „Thalassotherapije – Opatija" pulmologinja Malany Ćurić predavala je o intersticijskim bolestima pluća, a reumatologinja Marija Rogoznica Pavlović prikazala je tijek bolesti i način liječenja intersticijske bolesti pluća biološkom terapijom i antifibrotikom u bolesnika s reumatoidnim artritisom. Prof. dr. sc. Simeon Grazio iz Kliničkoga bolničkog centra Sestre milosrdnice iz Zagreba održao je revijsko predavanje o kliničkim manifestacijama i mogućnostima liječenja spondiloartritisa biološkim lijekovima. Endokrinološke komplikacije u reumatskih bolesnika naglasila je prof. dr. sc. Tatjana Kehler s temama autoimunosne bolesti štitnjače, osteoporoze i pretilosti. Zatim je uslijedio izbor tema iz nedavnih znanstvenih istraživanja djelatnika i suradnika „Thalassotherapije – Opatija". Prof. dr. sc. Tamara Turk-Wensveen pokazala je rezultate na temu utjecaja šećerne bolesti na upalni odgovor, a dr. sc. Iva Uravić Bursać rezultate na temu utjecaja metaboličkog sindroma u psorijatičnog bolesnika na dijastoličku funkciju. Specijalistica obiteljske medicine Tina Zavidić prikazala je rezultate istraživanja u ambulantama Istarskih domova zdravlja o brzini širenja pulsnog vala i krutosti aorte u bolesnika s osteoartritisom koljena.

Završna predavanja održali su prof. dr. sc. Srđan Novak iz Kliničkoga bolničkog centra Rijeka, koji je govorio o sigurnosnom profilu i trajanju primjene biološke terapije, i prof. dr. sc. Jasminka Milas Ahić iz Kliničkoga bolničkog centra Osijek, koja je naglasila potrebu podešavanja biološke terapije u posebnim klinič-

patients. Tina Zavidić, MD, a specialist in Family Medicine, presented the results of research conducted in the outpatient clinics of the Istrian Health Centres on the topic of pulse wave velocity and aortic stiffness in patients with osteoarthritis of the knee.

The final lectures were given by Prof. Srđan Novak, MD, PhD from the University Hospital Centre Rijeka, who discussed the topic of the safety profile and duration of treatment with biological therapy drugs, and Prof. Jasminka Milas Ahić, MD, PhD from the University Hospital Centre Osijek, who highlighted the need for biological therapy adjustment in special clinical circumstances (such as pregnancy, infections, vaccinations and surgical procedures). The Meeting was concluded with a lecture and discussion led by Prof. Branislava Popović, MD, PhD, Head of the Department of Family Medicine at the School of Medicine, University of Rijeka, who stressed the need for cooperation between rheumatologists and primary care physicians in the treatment of rheumatic patients. On that note, Prof. Porin Perić, MD, PhD from the University Hospital Centre Zagreb pointed out the importance of a timely diagnosis of arthritis, enthesitis, dactylitis and inflammatory back pain at the family medicine clinic. Methods of effective screening of patients for the first rheumatological examination were also discussed and a proposal was given about the renewal of the education courses for screening patients with rheumatic diseases organised by specialists in Rheumatology. The participants of the Meeting were given a continuing medical education manual entitled "Multidisciplinary Approach in the Treatment of Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis", edited by Porin Perić and Iva Žagar (Medicinska naklada Zagreb, 2025). Over 50 attending physicians and nurses, whose contribution to the care of rheumatic patients is indispensable, participated in this Meeting. The Meeting included free attendance, it was registered with the Croatian Medical Association, and the participants were awarded 9 points for lecturers and 7 points for listeners. Finally, I would like to thank all my colleagues who participated in the lectures, discussions and who provided their commentary on the topics presented, as well as the pharmaceutical companies who provided financial support for the execution of this Meeting. All of the aforementioned participants and partners improved the level of quality of this course. I would also like to thank the technical organiser for the great effort that they put in and their commitment to making the course possible.

Prof. Gordana Laškarin, MD, PhD,
Course Leader
"*Thalassotherapia Opatija*",
Special Hospital for Medical Rehabilitation of Heart, Lung and Rheumatic Diseases

kim okolnostima (trudnoća, infekcije, cjepljenje i operacijski zahvati). Skup je zaključen predavanjem i raspravom koju je vodila prof. dr. sc. Branislava Popović, pročelnica Katedre za obiteljsku medicinu Medicinskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci, a koja je naglasila potrebu za suradnjom između reumatologa i liječnika u primarnoj zdravstvenoj zaštiti oko zbrinjavanja reumatskih bolesnika. U to ime prof. dr. sc. Porin Perić iz KBC-a Zagreb ukazao je na važnost pravovremenog dijagnosticiranja artritisa, entezitisa, daktilitisa i upalne križobolje u ambulanti liječnika obiteljske medicine. Također se raspravljalo o načinima učinkovitog probira bolesnika za prvi reumatološki pregled i predloženo je obnavljanje tečajeva edukacije za probir bolesnika s reumatskom bolesti u organizaciji specijalista reumatologa. Sudionicima skupa podjeljen je priručnik stalnog medicinskog usavršavanja *Multidisciplinarni pristup bolesniku s reumatoidnim artritisom*, koji su uredili Porin Perić i Iva Žagar (Medicinska naklada, Zagreb, 2025.). U radu skupa sudjelovalo je više od pedeset liječnika slušača te medicinskih sestara, čiji je doprinos u skrbi reumatskog bolesnika nezaobilazan. Prisustvovanje skupu bilo je besplatno, a skup je registriran u Hrvatskoj liječničkoj komori i dodijeljeno mu je 9 bodova za predavače i 7 bodova za slušače. Na kraju velika zahvala svim kolegicama i kolegama koji su sudjelovali s predavanjima, raspravama i komentarima te farmaceutskim kućama koje su pružile financijsku podršku, a svi zajedno su unaprijedili kvalitetu tečaja. Zahvaljujem tehničkom organizatoru na velikom trudu i angažmanu oko ostvarivanja tečaja.

Prof. dr. sc. Gordana Laškarin,
voditeljica tečaja
Specijalna bolnica za rehabilitaciju
bolesti srca, pluća i reumatizma
„Thalassotherapia – Opatija"