SEEMEDJ SOUTHEASTERN EUROPEAN MEDICAL JOURNAL

PAIN MEDICINE IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA – FROM VISION TO REALITY

Pain management is one of the most complex fields of modern medicine. It requires professional expertise, experience, an understanding of patient needs, and collaboration among specialists from various disciplines. This issue of the journal is dedicated to the 6th Croatian Congress on Pain Management with international participation, taking place in Osijek from October 15 to 17, 2026. The congress serves as a vital forum for the exchange of knowledge, experience, and ideas aimed at improving daily clinical practice and the quality of care for individuals living with pain.
Pain is one of the most common reasons patients in Europe seek medical attention. Short-term (acute) pain serves a protective function, whereas long-term (chronic) pain—defined as pain lasting longer than three months—can severely impair quality of life. Chronic pain affects not only physical and mental health but also the ability to work. Chronic pain is not merely a symptom but a distinct clinical entity.
The European Pain Federation (EFIC) has recognized and emphasizes that chronic pain places a burden on healthcare systems and leads to massive economic losses; consequently, it demands urgent political attention and coordinated action in the formulation of public policy. The costs are associated with reduced productivity, prolonged sick leave, early retirement, and an increased demand for health and social services.
A paradigm shift is needed—not only in how we treat pain but also in how we perceive it. Each of us can play a part in this change.

This year's Congress holds special significance as it takes place at a pivotal moment for pain medicine in Croatia—following the approval of a sub-specialty in pain medicine. This represents a crucial step forward, securing pain medicine its well-deserved place within the healthcare system as a clearly defined field of professional specialization.

The papers published in this issue cover current topics regarding acute, chronic, neuropathic, and cancer-related pain, as well as multidisciplinary treatment and minimally invasive procedures.

I would like to thank all the authors for the effort they put into writing these papers, as well as the editorial board of *SEEMEDJ* for recognizing the importance of this topic and making it possible to publish a special issue dedicated to pain management.

Guest Editor

Dino Budrovac, MD, PhD
Specialist in Anesthesiology, Reanimatology, and Intensive Care Medicine
President of the Croatian Pain Society – Croatian Medical Association