

News from the Croatian Wound Association (CWA)

The Croatian wound association was established on January 24, 2007 as an independent, non-profit civil organization, based on long-term work in modern wound treatment as well as on education and promotion of up to date knowledge in this area.

Soon after its foundation, thanks to the lobbying of Mr. Matthias Heindl (Business Manager South-East Europe, Mölnlycke Health Care) and Ms. Suzana Barić, it joined the European Association that same year. This development came as a complete surprise to us and something for which we were not yet prepared, a fact which caused numerous controversies and disagreements. This resulted in a loss of time and energy in the organization of the association and an integration of the goals, a process in which we had the support of Mr. Henrik J. Nielsen (Organizational Manager, EWMA) and Professor Marco Romanelli (President of EWMA).

The reasons and aims of the founding of the association were the increasing problems of patients with chronic wounds and a growing awareness of the value of a multidisciplinary approach to the solution of the problem called "the wound" – involving teamwork from physicians of different specialities, nurses and other participants involved in the therapeutic process.

The second important issue is that of education – by means of professional meetings, printed material and *in loco* practice. The

key message of all these activities is "basic knowledge for all", along with a standardization of basic procedures in clinical practice from prevention and diagnostics to treatment.

In addition we noticed that the transmission of high-quality information is very important in achieving our mission. For this purpose we established an open phone line, fax and e-mail service for inquiries from all parties facing wound-related problems. We established communication with primary, secondary and tertiary health care, reference centres and renowned experts in this field. We initiated cooperation with other associations which, along with their other foci, deal with chronic wounds. The members of the association are physicians – specialists in various fields, nurses and representatives of producers of medical aids.

In realizing our mission we established good cooperation with prominent experts in Croatia and abroad (Slovenia), medical institutions (The Dubrava Clinical Hospital and General Hospital Sveti Duh, both in Zagreb), scientific institutions (Croatian Academy of Medical Sciences) and prominent members of EWMA – Professor M. Romanelli, Mrs. Zena Moore and Mrs. Suzanne Leaphart from the USA.

We also have a good working communication with producers of medical products and aids devoted to wound care, as well as producers of drugs – primarily antibiotics.

In keeping in line with our aims we set up a web site: www.huzr.hr which is designed to represent a dynamic form of communication featuring numerous sections including a description of the association, a history of wound healing, the association structure, instructions on targeted sampling of wounds for microbiological examination, and, of course – questions and answers.

The web site makes the WITA computer programme of tissue typization – an essential tool for the standardization and comparison of the wound tissue - available to all members of the association, as well as all other interested parties. In November 2008 we organized a Symposium with international participation called "Pressure ulcers". The Proceedings of the Symposium were printed as a supplement of the indexed journal Acta Medica Croatica.

We commenced cooperation with other associations including:
Croatian Society for Bulous Epidermolysis (DEBRA)
Croatian Association of Paraplegics and Tetraplegics (HUPT)
Croatian Gerontological Association
and
The Slovenian wound association (DORS).

In brief about the Symposium "Pressure Ulcers"

The Croatian Wound Association (*Hrvatska udruga za rane* – HUR) organized a Symposium on "Pressure ulcers" with international participation on November 13–15, 2008 in the Stubičke Toplice spa near Zagreb. The Symposium was well

attended by around 350 physicians of various specialities, nurses, medical technicians and house-call nurses from Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. In addition to the above number there were around 50 guests from Croatia and abroad and representatives of 20 medical product producers.

The aim of the Symposium was to elaborate in full the issues related to prevention, care and treatment of pressure ulcers. In addition, the aim was to propose certain guidelines on the treatment of patients with pressure ulcers appropriate to our situation and capabilities. Targeted lectures were given by invited guest speakers – eminent experts from Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, Ireland and USA.

The topics of the Symposium were: Pressure ulcers – classification, levels, problems; Aetiology and risk factors; Prevention of the development of pressure ulcers; Skin care surrounding the pressure ulcer; Patient care; The practice of wound bed preparation in pressure ulcer management; Advantages and limitations of various surgical techniques in the treatment of pressure ulcers; Reconstructive interventions; Experiences of the Clinic for Plastic Surgery of the Dubrava Clinical Hospital in the treatment of pressure ulcer; Causative agents and treatment of pressure ulcer infection; The importance of supportive compresses; Supportive treatment by negative pressure; The role of hyperbaric oxygenation in supportive treatment; Relevance of nutrition in patients with pressure ulcers; Pain control; Physical therapy; Pressure ulcers

and the body-mind whole; Follow-up of patients with pressure ulcers and nurse documentation; The role of house-call and extra-hospital services; Pressure ulcer – a gerontological public health problem; The rights of patients with pressure ulcers within the scope of the Health Insurance Act – in acquiring anti-ulcer aids; WITA – the programme of typization of wound tissues; The role of laser, ultrasound and polarized light in the treatment of pressure ulcers.

Of the guest speakers we have to single out Professor Marco Romanelli, the President of the European Wound Management Association (EMWA), Mrs. Zena Moore, Secretary of EWMA, Dr. Ciril Triller – Deputy President of the Slovenian Society for Wound Management (DORS) and Mrs. Suzanne Leaphart from Boston, USA.

The Symposium began with the opening words from the President of the Croatian Wound Association Dr. Nastja Kučičec-Tepeš, PhD, words of welcome from Mrs. Sonja Borovšak, the Prefect of the Krapina – Zagorje County and Assist. Prof. Dragan Schwarc, the State Secretary in the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. This occasion was used to present the book by Professor Janko Hančević and co-workers "The Prevention of the Development of Pressure ulcer". The opening ended with cocktail and refreshments prepared by the students of the Secondary School for Catering in Zabok and arias sung by the opera mezzosoprano Lea Bulić.

The whole of Friday was reserved for lectures and discussion, and on Saturday we had a round table discussion. Both the participants and lecturers were present at the round table around which a lively discussion developed touching upon the issues of every-day clinical practice, specific clinical cases and the possibilities of modern approaches to prevention, care and treatment within our capabilities. An active role at the round table was taken by the representative of the Croatian Association of Paraplegics and Tetraplegics (HUPT) who outlined the problems encountered by persons with special needs.

During the Symposium a meeting was held between the representatives of HUR and EWMA's Jan Kristensen (EWMA Business Office) in which the common goals and further activities were defined. There was also a meeting of the representatives of HUR with the representatives of associations from Slovenia and Serbia from which a coordinating body was formed (Dr. Saša Borović, Serbian Association for Wound Treatment, Dr. Ciril Triller – Society for Wound Treatment of Slovenia and Dr Dubravko Huljev, MSc – Croatian Wound Association) which will propose possible forms of cooperation and present them to the assemblies of their associations with the aim of signing a formal agreement of cooperation.

The Symposium was closed with a conclusion that during 2009 we will monitor the frequency of pressure ulcers and on the basis of these data determine the incidence and magnitude of the problem.

At the end of the discussion, among the many other questions raised there was one about our cooperation with EWMA and what we can expect as members of the Association. The answer is very simple: we expect support in the realization of set goals through standardization, education and participation in projects and epidemiological investigations.

Dr. Nastja Kučičec-Tepič, PhD
President, HUR