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## THE EVOLUTION OF THALASSOTHERAPY IN VELI LOŠINJ

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Dječja bolnica za alergijske bolesti s odjelom za odrasle  
51551 Veli Lošinj

Review

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*SUMMARY* Although there is some evidence of human settlements on the island of Lošinj during the prehistoric period, the settlement of the island really began in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Following the Mongol invasion of Croatia in 1280 Obrad Harnović with 12 Croatian families moved into the southern part of the island and founded the first settlement, Velo Selo. The official name »Veli Lošinj« first appeared in 1398. In the beginning the Lošinj settlers raised livestock and farmed the land, and from the 15<sup>th</sup> century on, fishing, shipbuilding and seafaring developed. Beneficial climatic conditions on Lošinj attracted the attention of prominent Austrian medical experts as early as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the basis of their expert opinion (researches into the climate and plant life by Dr. Clar and Prof. Haračić), Veli Lošinj was proclaimed a »climatic resort« in 1892. A few years earlier, in 1886, the Austrian Archduke and Admiral Carl Stephan of the Habsburg dynasty, built a winter residence »Wartsee«, in which the present hospital is located. In 1888/89, under the patronage of the city government of Vienna, the first convalescent home for scrofulous and ailing children was opened, and it was the forerunner of today's Hospital for Allergies. Dr. Ernest Mayerhofer, the founder of pediatrics in Croatia, worked there as a young physician during the First World War. Veli Lošinj achieved a real prosperity from the end of the last century to the end of the First World War. A series of small sanatoriums, pensions and hotels for the treatment of pulmonary and glandular tuberculosis sprang up. With the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920 and the Italian annexation of the island, the development of tourism, especially medical tourism, declined primarily due to competitive reasons. To illustrate this, the number of tourists in 1893 was 415, in 1903 it was 2135, in 1913 it was 8427, while in 1935 this number fell to 2277. After the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the Children's Convalescent Home, the forerunner of our Children's Hospital, was reopened in 1926 and the first one was used to treat first Viennese and then Italian children. Medical programmes were re-established after the liberation.

The Island Lošinj has a long history. It is known that it was already inhabited in the Middle Paleolithic (site in Vela Jama in Osorčica).<sup>1</sup> Lošinj, as well as other Kvarner islands, was known under the common name of Apsyrtides, the term, being linked with the legend of Jason, Medea and her brother Apsyrtus, who was buried near Osor, which was named after him (Greek: Apsoros).<sup>2</sup> The first historically identified inhabitants of the island were members of an

Illyrian tribe, the Liburni, who were sailors and pirates. During the expansion of Rome towards the East, the Liburni were driven back and this territory became part of the Province of Illyricum.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire (476 A. D.), it temporarily fell under the rule of the King Odoakar, then the Ostrogoths and in 535 it became a part of the Byzantine Empire. Around 630 A. D. the Slavic tribe of the Croats

reached and Adriatic coast and made it their home. In 925 the island became part of the King Tomislav's Croatian Kingdom. Distant and weakened, the Eastern Roman Empire was torn by integral struggles for power and it was not capable of defending its western frontiers. The Kvarner islands were thus subjected to frequent invasions by various tribes and nations.

In this period the merchant city-state of Venice was growing stronger and it showed special interest in our regions. In 998 the doge Peter II Orseolo conquered Osor. During the reign of the Hungaro-Croatian King Koloman I, these regions temporarily became part of his realm, but after a short period they again fell under the rule of Venice. From 1357–1409, they were once more a part of the Hungaro-Croatian Kingdom until they were finally sold to Venice by the pretender to the Hungaro-Croatian throne, Ladislav of Naples. They remained under Venetian rule until its fall in 1797. From 1804–1814 they were a part of Napoleon's Illyrian Province, and subsequently a part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, until its collapse after the First World War. The Treaty of Rapallo (1920) assigned the island to the Italian Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> From the beginning of the Second World War to the capitulation of Italy, active resistance was not possible due to the concentration of military and political forces on the island; however, preparations were made to take over at the moment of the expected capitulation. So, Italian garnisons were successfully disarmed and Chetniks destroyed. However, in November 1943, German armed forces landed on the island and shortly thereafter the first victims fell. Such conditions continued until April 1945 when units of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dalmatian Division in cooperation with the Northern Adriatic Naval Fleet in heavy fighting succeeded in destroying the enemy and freeing the island on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1945.

Although there is some evidence of human settlements on the island of Lošinj during the prehistoric period, the real settling of the island began only in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Following the Mongol invasion of Croatia in 1280, Obrad Harnović with 12 Croatian families moved into the southern part of the island and founded the first settlement, Velo Selo. The official name Veli Lošinj first appeared in 1398 in a treaty about mutual rights and obligations made between the administrative centre in Osor and the newly named Veli Lošinj.<sup>5</sup> In the beginning the Lošinj settlers raised livestock and farmed the land, and from the 15<sup>th</sup> century on, fishing, shipbuilding and seafaring developed. The first Lošinj sailor mentioned in historical documents is Jakov Gladulić of Veli Lošinj, about whom there are almost no data except the year of this death in 1621. He was probably the owner of a small coastal navigation ship.

The first Lošinj sea-captain and commander of a larger ship was Petar Petrina, also from Veli Lošinj, who sailed ca. 1650 with his sailing ship from Trieste to London and back and thus marked the beginning of the famous Lošinj seafaring tradition. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, by some called «the golden age» of Veli Lošinj, according to data from an official registrar from 1746, Veli Lošinj had a fleet consisting of 24 larger and 52 smaller ships, 24 oceangoing sea-captains and 12 captains of coastal navigation. On 10 January 1799 captain Petar Budinić crossed the Atlantic in his ship «Santo Domenico» and landed in North America. On 6 September 1799, a 300-ton brigantine «Commercio» was

launched in the Rovenska shipyard, which was undoubtedly a great success for the Lošinj shipbuilders in those days. However, a short time after that, due to political circumstances caused by the Napoleonic Wars, all activity in the shipyard stopped and it is believed to have been destroyed in those tumultuous times. In 1858 Lošinj had a marchand fleet consisting of 130 ships, totalling 60,270 tons, but from then on, its seafaring power declined in the merciless competitive race between sailing ships and steamers for the domination of the world seas. The building of clippers and metal sailing ships of larger and larger tonnage was not able to stop the irrepressible expansion of faster, safer and cheaper steamers, so that finally in 1911 there were no more Lošinj ocean-going ships left.<sup>6</sup>

Beneficial climatic conditions on Lošinj attracted the attention of prominent Austrian medical experts as early as the end of the last century. On the basis of their expert opinion, founded on years of research into the climate and plant life by Doctor C. Clar and Professor A. Haračić, Veli Lošinj was proclaimed a «climatic resort» in 1892.<sup>7</sup>

A few years earlier, in 1886, the Austrian Archduke and Admiral Carl Stephan of the Habsburg dynasty had built a winter residence «Wartsee» in which the present hospital is located. In 1888/89, under the patronage of the city government of Vienna, the first convalescent home for scrofulous and ailing children was opened and it was the forerunner of today's Hospital for Allergies. During the First World War, the founder of pediatrics in Croatia, Professor Dr. Ernest Mayerhofer, worked there as a young physician. From the end of the last century to the end of the First World War, Veli Lošinj achieved a real prosperity in medical and touristic fields. A series of small sanatoriums, pensions and hotels for the treatment of pulmonary and glandular tuberculosis sprang up.<sup>8</sup>

With the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920 and the Italian annexation of the island, the development of tourism, especially medical tourism, declined primarily due to competitive reasons. To illustrate this, the number of tourists in 1893 was 415, in 1903 it was 2135, in 1913 it was 8427, while in 1935 this number fell to 2277. After the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Children's Hospital was reopened in 1926 and it was first used to treat Viennese and then Italian children. After the liberation of Lošinj, medical programmes were slowly re-established.

In 1946, the Children's Convalescent Home became the Children's Sanatorium for Inactive Tuberculosis and some time later, in 1947, the Red Cross Society of Croatia opened a climatic sanatorium which in 1962 became the Children's Hospital for Respiratory Allergies. In 1948 «Wartsee» was turned into a climatic sanatorium for adults which became the Hospital for Allergic Diseases in 1962.<sup>5,7</sup> In 1966, the total capacity of all three hospitals was ca. 400 beds. There were over 100 medical workers employed, among whom there were 10 doctors, mostly pediatricians and internists. Due to changes in legislation about the financing of medical insurance, which made the application of natural elements in treatment impossible, the activity in the Veli Lošinj hospitals again stagnated and the Hospital for Allergic Diseases, the Children's Hospital for Respiratory Allergies and the Children's Sanatorium for Inactive Tuberculosis became the present Children's Hospital for Allergies with a ward for adults.

During 1967, the Hospital gradually stabilized and grew, and in 1968 its rapid medical and economic prosperity began. Namely, a profitable contract was signed between the Hospital and the Ministry of Health of the German Democratic Republic on the basis of which two groups of 60 children each and a group of 20 adult patients stayed there that same year.<sup>9</sup> Later, this number increased from year to year, reaching in 1988, the year of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, 270 children and 95 adult patients with a corresponding number of teachers, pediatricians and physiotherapists. Patients stay in Veli Lošinj for 4–6 weeks through the year. To the present day, more than 35,000 patients from the GDR have been treated in the Hospital. Along with a success in international medical tourism, medical treatment of Yugoslav patients, both children and adults, has gradually been re-established and expanded.

At present, the Hospital annually treats an average of 2000 children and 2000 adults. It has a staff of about 100 medical workers, among whom there are pediatricians, internists and dermatologists, some of whom have additional specialist degrees (DSc & MSc). In 1985, the Hospital became a teaching hospital for the Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka and it provides lectures for undergraduate, post-graduate and specialization studies.<sup>5</sup>

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#### RAZVITAK TALASOTERAPIJE U VELOM LOŠINJU

Pregledni članak

**Ključne riječi:** Veli Lošinj, talasoterapija, povijest

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**SAŽETAK** Od prvih saznanja o postojanju čovjeka iz doba paleolitika do naših dana, otok Lošinj zajedno sa susjednim Kvarnerskim otocima ima dugu i burnu povijest. Međutim, njegovo naseljavanje počinje tek u 13. stoljeću. Nakon provale Mongola u Hrvatsku godine 1280, Obrad Harnović s 12 hrvatskih obitelji naseljava južni dio otoka i osniva prvo naselje, Velo Selo. Službeni naziv Veli Lošinj prvi put susrećemo godine 1398. Spočetka stanovnici se bave stočarstvom i poljoprivredom, a od 15. stoljeća i ribarstvom, pomorstvom i brodogradnjom. Povoljni klimatski uvjeti otoka već koncem prošlog stoljeća privukli su pozornost uglednih austrijskih medicinskih stručnjaka. Na osnovi njihovih procjena zasnovanih na podacima dugogodišnjih meteoroloških motrenja dr. C. Clara i prof. A. Haračića, Veli Lošinj godine 1892. proglašen je za «klimatsko mjesto». Još ranije, godine 1886. nadvojvoda i admiral Carl Stephan iz dinastije Habsburg gradi svoj zimovnik Wartsee u kome je danas smještena bolnica. Godine 1888/89. pod patronatom bečke općine otvara se prvo oporavilište za skrofuloznu i slabunjavu djecu, preteča današnje Dječje bolnice za alergijske bolesti. Tu je tijekom I. svjetskog rata kao mlad liječnik radio osnivač hrvatske pedijatrije prof. dr. Ernest Mayerhofer. Od konca prošlog stoljeća do završetka I. svjetskog rata Veli Lošinj doživljava pravi zdravstveno-turistički procvat. Niče niz manjih sanatorija, pansiona i hotela u kojima se ponajvećma liječe bolesnici s plućnom i žlijezdanom tuberkulozom. Mirom u Rapallu godine 1920. i pripajanjem otoka Kraljevini Italiji, zbog pretežno konkurentskih razloga dolazi do zastoja u razvoju turizma osobito zdravstvenog. To najbolje pokazuju podaci prema kojima je godine 1893. bilo 415 turista, godine 1903. 1235, godine 1913. 8427, a godine 1935. 2277 turista. Nakon pada Austro-Ugarske Monarhije, dječje oporavilište (preteča bolnice) ponovno se otvara godine 1926. i tu se do godine 1933. liječe bečka djeca, a zatim djeca iz Italije. Nakon oslobođenja Lošinja 20. travnja 1945. postupno se počinje obnavljati medicinski rad. Dječje oporavilište godine 1946. Postaje Dječji sanatorij za inaktivnu tuberkulozu, a godine 1947. Crveni križ Hrvatske otvara svoje klimatsko lječilište koje se godine 1962. pretvara u Dječju bolnicu za alergijske bolesti dišnih organa. U dvorcu Wartsee u predjelu Podjavori, godine 1948. osniva se klimatsko lječilište za odrasle koje se također 1962. pretvara u Bolnicu za alergijske bolesti. Do godine 1966. u sve tri bolnice bilo je približno 400 postelja, a zaposleno je bilo više od 100 zdravstvenih radnika od kojih desetak liječnika pretežno pedijatar i internista. Izmjena Zakona o financiranju zdravstvenog osiguranja koja onemogućuje daljnju primjenu prirodnog faktora u liječenju dovodi do potpune stagnacije rada u sve tri bolnice, čak do zatvaranja dviju od njih, a Dječja bolnica za alergijske bolesti dišnih organa pretvara se u današnju Dječju bolnicu za alergijske bolesti s odjelom za odrasle, i od godine 1967. postupno se stabilizira. Sklapanjem povoljnog ugovora s Ministarstvom zdravlja DR Njemačke godine 1968. počinje nagli medicinski i ekonomski uspon Bolnice koji godine 1988. dakle na 100-godišnjicu osnutka rezultira s više od 160.000 bolničkih dana i u prosjeku s približno 400 bolesnika na dan.