

# Znanstveni skup "Rijeka i Riječani u medicinskoj povjesnici" 2000.-2009. - Povijest medicine kao sastavnica znanstvene prepoznatljivosti

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## SCIENCE CONVENTION “RIJEKA AND ITS CITIZENS IN MEDICAL HISTORY” 2000–2009 – HISTORY OF MEDICINE AS A COMPONENT OF SCIENTIFIC VISIBILITY

ZNANSTVENI SKUP “RIJEKA I RIJEČANI U MEDICINSKOJ  
POVJESNICI” 2000.–2009. – POVIJEST MEDICINE KAO  
SASTAVNICA ZNANSTVENE PREPOZNATLJIVOSTI

Igor Eterović\*

### SUMMARY

*This paper analyses the form and content of the first ten science conventions “Rijeka and its Citizens in Medical History” (“Rijeka i Riječani u medicinskoj povjesnici”) which were held in the period between 2000 and 2009 according to the archive data of the convention organizers Croatian Scientific Society for the History of Health Culture. It presents data on the inception of the idea of a science convention, its organisational features (organising committees, presiding committees, convention topics, venue, patrons) and number of participants. A total of 174 presentations whose abstracts were published in individual Convention Collections were given at the ten conventions by 103 different authors from Croatia and neighbouring countries. After the first ten years the entire material was compiled and published with an analytical comment in the anniversary issue Znanstveni skup Rijeka i Riječani u medicinskoj povjesnici 2000.-2009. (Scientific Convention Rijeka and its Citizens in Medical History 2000.-2009.) within Biblioteka AMHA. Most of the papers printed in extenso are published in the magazine AMHA – Acta medico historica Adriatica. The analysis of all presentations provides quantity data on the number of presented papers, number of presenters and number of co-authored papers, as well as quality determinants within the evaluation of the achievement of science convention objectives. The end gives a review of the significance of this convention within the regional, national and international aspect.*

**Keywords:** history of medicine, science convention, Rijeka, Croatia

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## INTRODUCTION

The science convention “Rijeka and its Citizens in Medical History” was held for the first time in 2000, and it has been held regularly every year.

The first ten conventions held were analysed based on the corpus found in the booklets of abstracts and programmes of each individual convention, all of which are stored in the archive of the Croatian Scientific Society for the History of Health Culture<sup>1</sup>. In addition to the authors, topics and summary of each individual presentation, they also indicate convention topics (if they were defined in that year), organisers, organising committee members, venue and time of the convention, as well as sponsors and patrons. They therefore represent fundamental documents for gaining insight into the content structure, range and organisational dynamics of the convention over the years.

The next important document from the documentation of the CSSHHC is the exposition of the objectives of this science convention which was composed by its originator, founder and coordinator Prof. Dr. Sc. Anton Škrobonja, the President of CSSHHC and also of the Organising Committee of all conventions held so far.

Although the majority of the paper represents a quantity data analysis of the first ten conventions “Rijeka and its Citizens in Medical History”, the quality analysis is also unavoidable and closely related to it. It points to the level of achievement of individual scientific and professional objectives of the convention at the end of the paper.

It should be noted that the complete material (all presentation abstracts) was compiled and published with an analytical comment in the anniversary issue *Znanstveni skup Rijeka i Riječani u medicinskoj povjesnici 2000.-2009.* (*Scientific Convention Rijeka and its Citizens in Medical History 2000.-2009.*) within Biblioteka AMHA after the first ten years had passed.<sup>2</sup> The Bibliography provides more detailed and comprehensive information about the first ten science conventions held.

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<sup>1</sup> Hereinafter: CSSHHC.

<sup>2</sup> Eterović, Igor (ed.), *Znanstveni skup Rijeka i Riječani u medicinskoj povjesnici 2000.-2009: Zbornik sažetaka izlaganja s kazalom imena i uvodnom studijom*, Biblioteka AMHA, vol. 8, CSSHHC, 2011.

## CONVENTION ORGANISATION, PATRONS, TOPICS AND SPONSORS

As already mentioned, the incentive to hold the convention came from Prof. Dr. Sc. Anton Škrobonja as the President of the Croatian Scientific Society for the History of Health Culture. Thus the Society became the organizer of the convention, along with the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Rijeka who stood by its side from the very beginning.

The convention was organised all of these years under the auspices of the City of Rijeka, and the patron of the last five conventions in the first decade was the Primorsko-goranska County.

The first convention was held at the Croatian Cultural Centre on Sušak and in the Hrvatska čitaonica Trsat (Croatian Reading Room Trsat), and all subsequent conventions were held at the Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka. The time of the convention varied over the years, but in general it was held in the period between the end of October and the beginning of December.

The President of the organising committees for the first ten conventions was Anton Škrobonja, and the secretaries and members of the organising committees changed on occasion.

Half of the conventions held in the first decade (2000, 2001, 2003, 2004 and 2009) had no particular topic, i.e. they had free topics related to the title of the convention. The topic of the 2002 convention was dedicated to Dr. Viktor Finderle, and the other conventions had special topics in addition to the free ones: the 2005 topic was “Medical Education in Rijeka prior to the Opening of the Faculty of Medicine in 1955”; “Nikola Tesla and Medicine”; 2007 “Jubilarians in Rijeka’s Medical History: Valter Rukavina, Stjepan Urban and Zvonimir Sušić”... All of the listed topics, including the 2002 topical convention, are in fact a realisation of the topic from the convention title dealing with a narrower field. It should be noted that the option of free topics i.e. subtopics was never excluded except in 2002, and since 2008 it has been especially pointed out that the free topics need not be associated with the local environment only, but that other free topics on the history of medicine from Croatia and other countries are welcome as well.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> With regard to this last matter, it is worth mentioning that this period is the time when the scientific journal *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* entered its fifth year of publishing (the first issue was published in 2003) so the need for expansion of topics in the magazine must have influenced the expansion of the range of topics at the convention as well. The convention became the main pool of potential paper authors for said magazine. The relationship between the science convention *Rijeka and its Citizens in Medical History* and the magazine *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* shall be dealt with later.

In the end, we cannot forget to mention the sponsors which supported the convention. The sponsor of the convention over the ten years was the City of Rijeka. The convention has also been sponsored for nine years by the Primorsko-goranska County and the Government of the Republic of Croatia via its resource ministries (of culture; science and technology; and science, education and sports). The convention has also been supported by Jadran galenski laboratorij d. d. from Rijeka for seven years now. It is followed by the Foundation of the University of Rijeka (four conventions), Foundation of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (three times), Ljekarna Jadran from Rijeka (twice).

### AUTHORS AND PRESENTATIONS

In the first ten years of the science convention a total of 174 presentations were given, signed by 257 authors, 239 of which were actual participants.<sup>4</sup> This number includes 115 individual presentations, 37 co-authored presentations with two authors, 20 co-authored papers with three authors and 2 co-authored papers with four authors.

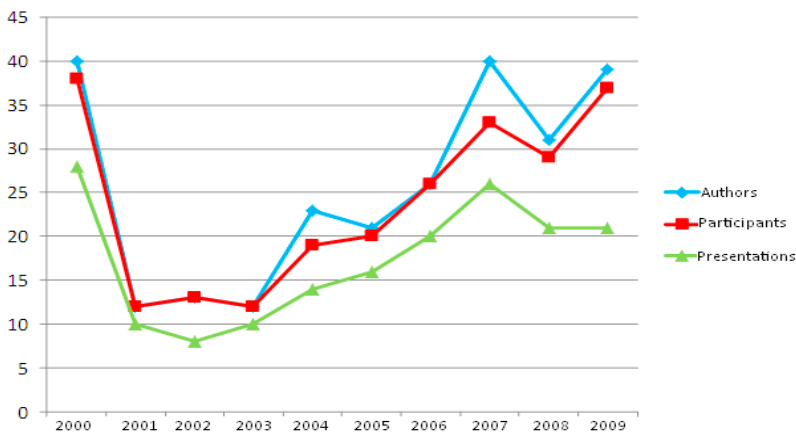


Figure 1 Yearly fluctuation of the number of authors, participants and presentations.

*Slika 1. Kretanje autora, sudionika i izlaganja po godinama*

<sup>4</sup> Since some participants are signed as co-authors of other presentations in the same convention, the number of participants is not necessarily in line with the formal number of presenters. This is why in Table 1, next to the number of authors, the number of participants is given separately in brackets. When the number of presenters and participants is the same, the number is not given in brackets.

Table 1 – Number of authors, participants, presentations and the types of co-author presentations

Tablica 1. Broj autora, sudionika, izlaganja i vrste koautorskih izlaganja

YEAR GODINA	AUTHORS (PARTICIPANTS) AUTORI (SUDIONICI)	PRESENTATIONS IZLAGANJA	INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS INDIVIDUALNA IZLAGANJA	TWO COAUTHORS DVA SUAUTORA	THREE COAUTHORS TRI SUAUTORA	FOUR COAUTHORS ČETIRI SUAUTORA
2000	40 (38) <sup>5</sup>	28	21	3	3	1
2001	12	10	8	2	-	-
2002	13	8	4	3	1	-
2003	12	10	8	2	-	-
2004	23 (19)	14	7	5	2	-
2005	21 (20)	16	12	3	1	-
2006	26	20	16	2	2	-
2007	40 (33)	26	17	4	5	-
2008	31 (29)	21	13	6	2	-
2009	39 (37)	21	9	7	4	1
TOTAL UKUPNO	257 (239)	174	115	37	20	2

The largest number of people (38) participated in the first year, which was also when the greatest number of presentations was given (28). The smallest number of presentations was held in 2002 (8), and the smallest number of people participated in 2001 and 2003 (12). Overall, annually 17 papers were presented on average, and 24 presenters participated.

### PARENT INSTITUTIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Overall, in the first ten years 103 different presenters participated in the science convention<sup>6</sup>. They came from different institutions from both home and abroad. It is important to mention that convention participants came from a number of institutions, many of which are located outside of the Republic of Croatia. The participants came from three faculties of medicine, seven other faculties, four clinical centres, two public health

<sup>5</sup> See previous footnote.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the number indicates the absolute number of participants, all conventions taken together while the former number of 239 participants is relative, taken with regard to every year separately.

care institutes, a veterinary institute, three hospitals, one emergency service, five museums and other institutions listed hereafter:

- Faculty of Medicine of the University of Rijeka
- Faculty of Medicine of the University of Sarajevo
- Faculty of Medicine of the University of Novi Sad
- Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry of the University of Zagreb
- Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Beograd
- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Rijeka
- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Mostar
- Faculty of Civil Engineering of the University of Rijeka
- Faculty of Law of the University of Rijeka
- Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb
- Clinical Hospital Centre Rijeka
- Clinical Hospital Centre Zagreb
- University Clinical Centre Ljubljana
- Clinical Centre of the University of Sarajevo
- Educational Public Health Care Institute of the Primorsko-goranska County
- Public Health Care Institute of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Veterinary Institute Rijeka
- Ogulin General Hospital
- Special Chronic Disease Hospital in Zagreb
- Vrapče Psychiatric Hospital
- Emergency Medical Service Rijeka
- Museum of Sarajevo
- The Zagreb City Museum
- Museum of Recent History in Celje
- The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Rijeka
- Labin National Museum
- Croatian Academy of Science and Art in Zagreb
- University of Zagreb
- Old Church Slavonic Institute in Zagreb
- University Library Rijeka
- Memorial Library and Mažuranić-Brlić-Ružić Collection, Rijeka
- Department of Conservation Rijeka
- Medical High School Ante Kuzmanića, Zadar
- Croatian Scientific Society for the History of Health Culture
- Slovenian Scientific Society for the History of Health Culture

- Croatian Society for the History of Medicine of the Croatian Medical Association
- Croatian Chamber of Dentists

## OBJECTIVES OF THE SCIENCE CONVENTION AND INDICATORS OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

In addition to the science convention application documents for fundraising, the archive of the Croatian Scientific Society also includes a list of scientific and professional objectives of the convention<sup>7</sup>:

Encouragement for systematic research and presentation of the legacy of Rijeka and the region in terms of the history of medicine;

Research into biographies and achievements of scientific and other workers, regardless of their background, in the development of medical thought and practice in our parts;

Research into the contribution of medical and other public workers originating from Rijeka and the region to the development of medicine in other parts;

Affirmation of medical, natural science and other connections of Rijeka and the region with other parts of Croatia and other countries;

Even though structured thematically in the second part within the “free topics” category, all possible articles from the history of other biomedical and medicine related natural, humanities and social sciences from all parts of Croatia and other countries are not less valuable;

Affirmation of the interdisciplinary approach to science on the example of the history of medicine and related scientific branches;

Developing research interests of students of graduate and post-graduate study programmes at the University of Rijeka according to their own cultural heritage;

Using research into this extremely prolific area to come to new findings on the scientific and medical dynamics of the local community in the past as additional confirmation of our century-long affiliation with European cultural and scientific developments.

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<sup>7</sup> These are various “Explanations” for various contests in which these chapters are necessarily included: “Description of the Science Convention” and “Scientific and Professional Objectives of the Convention”. Prof. Dr. Sc. Ante Škrobonja allowed me to take a look at the documentation.



To accomplish this level of objectives, we need a thorough content analysis of the science convention itself, which the limited space does not allow us. Based on the abstracts of presentations given at the science conventions, any such analysis is necessarily limited.<sup>8</sup> However, it is possible to at least mark the indicators for the objectives reached, which also serve as guidelines for further analysis<sup>9</sup>:

Only a glance of the topics covered by the participants at the convention shows that the first three objectives have been largely attained. An impressive corpus of new findings on the heritage of Rijeka and the wider region in terms of the history of medicine has been created owing to the gathering of researchers and the presentation of research at this convention, particularly when it comes to the biographies of medical and other workers contributing to medical thought in practice both in the Croatian Littoral and other parts.

The affirmation of medical and natural science links of Rijeka and the region with other parts of Croatia and outside of Croatia has primarily been accomplished by including foreign researchers who had contributed with new findings on the employees from these parts in other areas. These are primarily foreign researchers from the Republic of Slovenia, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Serbia. Many of them just point to some links of Rijeka and the wider region in terms of history of medicine with other, more distant parts and parts outside Croatia.

Openness of the convention to all free topics related to or in any other way connected to medical sciences has created a space for numerous researchers not closely related to medicine, or the history of medicine, to join with their contributions. In spite of the emphasis placed on history related to the doctors of medicine, all the attention is given to the diversity of articles dedicated to other fields of medicine: dentistry, pharmacology, veterinary medicine...

The latter also had an influence on the interdisciplinary approach to the topic of the history of medicine, which can be gathered from the variety of topics, primarily of those participants who come from institutions not closely related to medicine (e.g. the faculty of humanities and social sciences, the faculty of law and the faculty of civil engineering). A multi-

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<sup>8</sup> One such potentially more fruitful analysis could be possible on the basis of published articles made on the basis of presentations given at science conventions.

<sup>9</sup> A more in-depth analysis is given in the mentioned *Bibliography of the Science Convention Rijeka and its Citizens in Medical History*.

tude of various approaches is discernible: from strict historical analysis of the topics of the history of medicine through legal perspective in the shedding of light on the history of medicine to the linguistic issues concerning the medical history, to name but a few.

Developing students' interest in the history of medicine and their inclusion in the valorisation of its heritage in Rijeka and the Croatian Littoral is especially evident in the active participation of students in organizational committees of the convention, but also in their active inclusion in the work of science conventions and in them being presenters of their own papers and members of presiding committees.

The connection between our parts and European cultural trends has also been confirmed through the prism of the history of medicine, by research itself and by the diversity of topics found at the science convention. One should also add that this convention connected scientists and researchers from different countries and provided, alongside the scientific journal *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica*, a platform for the presentation of research not just of our region, but also of the wider area gravitating towards or in some way connected with this area and the entire Adriatic.

#### INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION: ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONVENTION

All of these mostly quantitative data are only a basic indication of the attempt to speak on the significance of the science convention "Rijeka and its Citizens in Medical History." Therefore, in the end we will point out only certain guidelines that complete the attempt to determine the significance and value of the convention and that can serve as direction.

We should first stress *the local value of this convention*. First of all, the convention provided a basis for scientific research of the history of medicine of the Croatian Littoral, as a place in which results of those researches are presented to the scientific public. The number of participants, topic diversity and an established tradition are undoubtedly a credit to the parent institution hosting this convention – Faculty of Medicine of the University of Rijeka, as well as its entire scientific community, and it is also something they can be proud of.

As the only Croatian convention on the history of medicine which succeeded in establishing a tradition of continuity, it *likewise bears great significance on a national level* and represents surely the most significant convention on the history of medicine at such a level. In doing so, it gives

an invaluable contribution to the Croatian history of medicine. If we add to it the fact that the convention became the principal pool from which potential authors and papers were drawn for the only Croatian scientific journal on the history of medicine – *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* – then the previously mentioned assertion gains even more weight.<sup>10</sup>

On the *international scale*, it needs to be emphasized that this convention opened up to topics from the history of medicine, especially in last years of the first decade, which are not closely connected to the Croatian Littoral, but offer a certain link important for the understanding of medical history and our parts. It thus hosted numerous scientists and experts from foreign countries, which led to foreign scientists not only becoming engaged in shedding light on the history of medicine in these parts, but also giving insight into the connection between medicine and health care employees from this region with other countries and regions. This convention undoubtedly plays a major role in constructing the image of the institution, and is a part of its visibility on the international scale as well.

#### SAŽETAK

U radu se analizira forma i sadržaj prvih deset znanstvenih skupova “Rijeka i Riječani u medicinskoj povijesnici”, održanih od 2000. do 2009. godine, prema podacima iz arhive njihova organizatora, Hrvatskoga znanstvenog društva za povijest zdravstvene kulture. Predstavljaju se podaci o začetku ideje znanstvenog skupa, njegovim organizacijskim obilježjima (organizacijski odbori, predsjedništva, teme skupova, mjesto održavanja, pokrovitelji) i broju sudionika. Na deset skupova 103 različita autora iz Hrvatske i susjednih zemalja predstavilo je 174 izlaganja čiji su sažeci objavljeni u pojedinačnim zbornicima skupova. Nakon prvih deset godina kompletan je materijal sabran i uz analitički komentar objavljen u jubilarnoj Bibliografiji znanstvenog skupa, u sklopu Biblioteke AMHA. Većina radova in extenso je objavljena pretežno u časopisu AMHA – *Acta medico historica Adriatica*. Na temelju analize svih izlaganja donose se kvantitativni podaci o broju izloženih radova, broju izlagača i o broju suautorskih uradaka, ali i kvalitativne odrednice unutar razmatranja ostvarenosti ciljeva znanstvenog skupa. Na samom kraju nudi se osvrt na značenje ovog skupa u regionalnom, nacionalnom i međunarodnom pogledu.

**Ključne riječi:** povijest medicine, znanstveni skup, Rijeka, Hrvatska

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<sup>10</sup> Although the largest portion of works created on the basis of presentations was published in the scientific journal *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica*, a great number of them was published in other journals too (*Acta Facultatis Medicae Fluminensis, Medicina* etc.).