

THE DREAM IS NOW A REALITY
TEN YEARS AFTER THE FIRST CONGRESS OF BANTAO
(Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs)

Momir Polenakovic (Skopje), Dimitar Nenov (Varna), Ljubica Djukanovic (Belgrade),
Ali Basci (Izmir), Charalambos P. Stathakis (Athens)

In 1991 during the Symposium **Nephrology Today and Tomorrow**, held in Skopje at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Chronic Haemodialysis Programme in the Republic of Macedonia, several representatives of the various societies of nephrology started an initiative to found a Balkan society of nephrology. This initiative was expressed in a letter to the Balkan Societies, dated May 17, 1991 and signed by Prof. Dr. M. Polenaković, past President of the Yugoslav Society of Nephrology, Prof. Dr. Önen, President of the Turkish Society of Nephrology, Prof. Dr. D. Nenov, Vice-president of the Bulgarian Society of Nephrology, and Prim. Dr. A. Radmilović, Director of the Renal Unit – Belgrade City Hospital, Yugoslavia(1).

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Skopje, May 17th, 1991

To the President

During the Symposium "Nephrology today and tomorrow" held in Skopje, Yugoslavia, on May 16th and 17th, 1991 and dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the beginning of chronic hemodialysis program in Macedonia, the initiative was given for formation of a Balkan Society of Nephrology. The aim of this scientific society would be investigation of the etiology, early diagnosis, treatment and prevention of renal diseases, and rehabilitation of the renal patients, through a multi-disciplinary approach. The Association would enable rapid transfer of knowledge and experience, and efficient protection from renal diseases of the population in this region of the world.

The initiative was given by: Prof. Dr. M. Polenakovic, past president of the Yugoslav Society of Nephrology, Prof. Dr. K. Onen, president of the Turkish Society of Nephrology, Prof. Dr. D. Nenov, vice president of the Bulgarian Society of Nephrology, Prim. Dr. A. Radmilovic, director of the renal unit - Belgrade County Hospital, Yugoslavia.

Prof. Dr. K. Onen
Prof. Dr. D. Nenov
Prim. Dr. A. Radmilovic

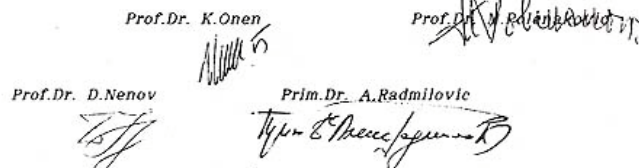


Figure 1. Initiative for foundation of the Balkan Society of Nephrology

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This initiative has grown with time, and during the First Congress of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs, on October 9, 1993 this idea was reconfirmed and transformed into the idea of establishing a Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (BANTAO). So BANTAO was born in Ohrid on October 9, 1993. Several distinguished nephrologists from Europe and the USA, among them Prof. H. Klinkmann (Rostock), Prof. J. Vienken (Bad Hamburg), Prof. D. Falkenhagen (Krems), Prof. P. Ivanovich (Chicago), Prof. P. Zucchelli (Bologna) and Prof. S. Mujais (Chicago) also supported the idea of the foundation of BANTAO.

A task force was formed from representatives of different societies from the Balkan Peninsula to make this project a reality. The task force included the following members: S. Kodra (Albania), D. Nenov (Bulgaria), Z. Kirjakov (Bulgaria), Gj. Masin (Macedonia), M. Polenaković (Macedonia), F. Akcicek (Turkey), E. J. Dorhout Mess (Turkey), Lj. Djukanović (Yugoslavia), A. Radmilović (Yugoslavia) and S. Strahinjić (Yugoslavia). Momir H. Polenaković, President of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs was elected as chairman of the task force.

In the letter addressed to the Presidents of the Balkan Societies of Nephrology, the task force members wrote: "It was clear to the participants that the founding of such a Society would have a clear impact on several aspects of the practice and research in nephrology and artificial organs in the Balkans firstly by increasing its international visibility and potential collaborative work, and recognition by international organisations. Secondly, such a society would facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge between the experts in our area. In addition, it would be a very positive symbolic act showing that collaborative work for the betterment of life is possible and desirable in our area and that coming together will bear better fruits on the human and cultural levels. It will also send a very clear signal to the outside world that the Balkans can be a place of collaboration and mutual understanding. Several international bodies such as the International Society of Artificial Organs and the International Faculty of Artificial Organs have signalled their interest in and support for the formation of such a society" (2).



MACEDONIAN SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY, DIALYSIS, TRANSPLANTATION AND ARTIFICIAL ORGANS

President,

Society of Nephrology

9.10.1993

Dear Colleague:

In 1991 during a special meeting in Skopje, Macedonia, several representatives of the various societies of Nephrology and Artificial Organs started an initiative to found a Balkan Society of Nephrology and Artificial Organs. This initiative was expressed in a letter to your society dated May 17, 1991. This initiative has grown with time and at the recent First Congress of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs, a task force was formed by representatives of different societies from the Balkan area to make this project a reality. It was clear for the participants that the founding of such a society would have clear impact on several aspects of the practice and research in Nephrology and artificial organs in the Balkan by first increasing the international visibility and potential collaborative work as well as recognition by international organizations. Secondly, such a society would facilitate exchange of experience and knowledge between the experts in our area. In addition it would be a very positive symbolic act showing that collaborative work for the betterment of life is possible and desirable in our area and that coming together will have better fruits on the human and cultural levels. It will also send a very clear signal to the outside world that the Balkans can be a place of collaboration and mutual understanding. Several international bodies such as the International Society of Artificial Organs and the International Faculty of Artificial Organs have signalled their interest and support in the formation of such a society.

The task force would like to invite your society and you personally to participate in the planning meeting and possibly the founding meeting to be held in Sofia, Bulgaria on the 15 th of January 1994. For further information please contact the chairman of the Task force Prof Dr Momir Polenakovic, President of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation, and Artificial Organs.

We look forward to your active participation in this important task.

Sincerely,

S. Kodra (Albania)

D. Nenov (Bulgaria)

Z. Kirjakov (Bulgaria)

Gj. Masin (Macedonia)

M. Polenakovic (Macedonia)

F. Akcicek (Turkey)

E.J. Dorhout Mees (Turkey)

Lj. Djukanovic (Yugoslavia)

A. Radmilovic (Yugoslavia)

S. Strahinjić (Yugoslavia)

Figure 2. Initiative for formation of BANTAO

After intensive mutual contacts and work by the members of the task force group with the other Balkan nephrologists it was decided that the first BANTAO Congress would be held in Varna from September 22nd to 24th, 1995.

The Congress in Varna was very successful, with more than 80 papers presented by nephrologists from the Balkans as well as from other European cities.

Nephrol Dial Transplant (1996) 11: 740

**Nephrology
Dialysis
Transplantation**

Congress Report

Nephrologists of the Balkan countries meet across political frontiers and war fronts—an example to politicians!

Bantao: a new European Medical Association overcomes Political obstacles

On September 22–24th 1995, the constitution and first Congress of a new scientific association, called BANTAO, took place in Varna, Bulgaria. BANTAO stands for Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs.

This is an extraordinary initiative of nephrologists working in cities throughout the Balkan countries who have been able to create a scientific association and to organize its first Congress, despite the boundaries of war, the rupture of international relations and other serious political problems which emerged in the Balkan countries after the disappearance of the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

Nephrologists from Varna, Sofia, Belgrade, Szeged, Nis, Timisoara, Ljubljana, Skopje, Izmir, Serres, Cluj-Napoca, Thessaloniki, Struga, Pleven, Istanbul, Kishinev, Miskolc, Bucharest, and other cities of the Balkan peninsula and surrounding countries met at this first Congress and signed the constitution of the new association.

The main goal of BANTAO is to promote scientific and technical cooperation in the field of renal diseases and artificial organs between the Balkan cities. This goal will be achieved not only through a periodical Congress, but also through lecturers exchange, fellowship exchange, scientific research methods exchange, joint meetings and courses, publications and cooperation in the field of renal transplant. The association office is located in Varna and will collaborate closely with the Varna Kidney Foundation. BANTAO wants to work closely with other international societies, and especially with the EDTA-ERA.

This first Congress was organized under the coordination of Prof. D. Nenov and with the collaboration of Prof. Z. Kirijakov, President of the Bulgarian Society of Nephrology. Various European nephrologists had the opportunity to participate in the constitution and first Congress of BANTAO in Varna. The scientific programme consisted of guest lecturers and oral communications related to a wide variety of topics. In clinical nephrology, the most notable were studies in protection of kidney function by colchicine in familial Mediterranean fever, a clinico-pathological study of kidney in pregnancy and the use of intravenous

immunoglobulin G in patients with chronic glomerulonephritis. Diagnosis of interstitial nephritis, hypertension in chronic glomerulonephritis, as well as the pathological patterns of acute glomerulonephritis were other topics discussed.

Problems related to dialysis took up a large part of the programme. Optimization of haemodialysis, cardiovascular problems in dialysis patients, the markers of inflammation, the hepatitis C virus infection, the treatment of renal bone disease, problems related to paediatric dialysis, biocompatibility of haemodialysis, the use of drugs in dialysis patients and Beta-2 microglobulin were all discussed during the Congress.

Renal transplantation, EPO and Balkan endemic nephropathy were topics included in the Congress sessions. Regarding renal transplantation, the experience in Turkey was presented as well as the morphological aspect of transplant dysfunction and the impact of switching to a new form of cyclosporin A. The frequency of vascular access thrombosis in EPO-treated patients was discussed as well as the use of this drug in pre-dialysis patients and end-stage renal disease patients. Presentations were given on the influence of EPO treatment on metabolism, survival, and lipid peroxidation of erythrocytes. Lastly, various studies about the aetiology, epidemiology and prevention of Balkan endemic nephropathy were discussed.

More than 80 posters were simultaneously presented during the meeting.

BANTAO represents an extraordinary initiative and should receive both scientific and economic support from the EDTA-ERA. The exceptional effort of collaboration shown by our Balkan colleagues, who have been able to carry out scientific activities in extremely adverse human conditions, is an example to the European nephrological community, which should not hesitate to offer all possible help to this new association.

*Fernando Valderrábano
Chairman of the EDTA-ERA Registry*

Editors note

See also the abstracts presented on pp. 741–747 in this issue.

Figure 3. Nephrologists of the Balkan countries meet across political frontiers and war fronts - an example to politicians!

Abstracts

**Abstracts of the first BANTAO Association Meeting, Varna, Bulgaria,
22–24 September 1995**
**Severe intoxication with Maprotylin—dramatic improvement
after plasmapheresis**

M. Asparuchova, V. Nenov, S. Katielieva, V. Georgiev; Navy Hospital, Clinic of Toxicology, Varna

A 43-year-old female with maniacal-depressive psychosis was accepted in the toxicology clinic 4 h after attempting suicide by taking 120 tablets of Maprotylin. After gastric lavage, where dissolved and undissolved tablets were found, the patient started with seizures and rapidly lost consciousness, while the generalized seizures continued repeatedly in a seizure status. Disturbances of cardiac rhythm and conductivity were found with an acute origin—supraventricular tachycardia, AV-block, ventricular extrasystoles. Cardiac failure and cyanosis ensued.

Plasmapheresis was started 6 h after admittance into hospital and continued for 1 h with the removal of 1250 ml of plasma, replaced by saline and dextran solutions.

The patient regained consciousness 5 h after the procedure, and improved her condition thereafter. A decrease in total blood protein was noted at 38 g/l, and plasma replacement was necessary. Acute cardiac failure of toxic origin developed, and was treated conventionally with cardiotonics. The patient was dismissed after 1 week in hospital. We suggest that plasmapheresis is a treatment of choice, whenever the toxic substance is highly bound to plasma proteins.

**High doses of intravenous immunoglobulin G in patients with
chronic glomerulonephritis**

N. I. Belovezhkov, D. V. Monova; University Hospital 'St. J. Rilski', Clinic of Internal Medicine, Sofia

With high doses intravenous immunoglobulin G (IVIG) we treated 108 patients with biopsy confirmed idiopathic and lupus glomerulonephritis. All patients had severe nephrotic syndrome, 34 of them had renal failure (serum creatinine from 141 to 504 µmol/l). The patients were previously treated for a long time with corticosteroids, immunosuppressors and anticoagulants without effect. They received Immunovenin Intact (Research Institute of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, Sofia) or Veinoglobuline (Pasteur Merieux, Paris) in dose 0.085 g/kg/24 h three times every other day. Depending on clinical course afterwards this therapy had been repeated in 56 patients after one to six months.

Complete remission (proteinuria <0.5 g daily) was present in 40 patients, partial remission (proteinuria = 0.5–3.5 g daily) was present in 52 patients and 16 patients were without effect. In 12/34 patients with impaired renal function, serum creatinine levels returned to normal after treatment. Our results suggest a possible benefit of IVIG therapy in some patients with chronic glomerulonephritis resistant to other treatment.

Ultrasound diagnostics of cystic formation in childhood

D. Bliznakova, I. Galabov; Medical University of Varna, Department of Paediatrics, Varna

The wide application of the echographic examination in pediatric nephrology enables the timely detection of renal cysts. Echography possesses several priorities over venous urography. In case of a renal cyst a typical anechoic zone with clear and smooth delineations as well as were echographically examined in the Department of Pediatrics, Medical University of Varna, during period from 1991 till 1994. There were changes arguing for a disease of the excretory system in 683 of them (48.78%). Cystic renal formations were established in 12 of them (0.59%). Three children had multicystic disease, 4 had parapelvic cysts and the remaining 5 had cortical renal cysts. Echographically detected multicystic renal disease was operatively verified. The children with parapelvic and cortical renal cysts are currently being followed-up as the echographic examination provides opportunities for dynamic monitoring of the patients.

**Acute renal failure (ARF) in intensive care units (ICU)—
treatment preferences**

V. Bocheva, V. Mushekov, A. Osichenko; Emergency Medical Institute 'Pirogov', Sofia

ARF alone or as a part of multiple system organ failure (MOF) is a common complication in ICU patients. Fifty five patients who needed extracorporeal deuration were investigated. The renal function was followed before, during and at the end of the treatment. The haemodialysis treatment (HD) was compared to continuous arteriovenous haemofiltration (CAVH) by estimating the deuration opportunity, the adequacy, the possibility of parenteral nutrition and the appearance of some complications. Some clinical and biochemical tests were used. The results show that CAVH is the better choice for cases with MOF, hepatorenal syndrome and haemodynamic instability. The patients who have haemorrhagic incidents and ARF without any other complications are more suitable for HD. The prognosis is better if the treatment starts earlier.

**Acute renal failure and fulminant liver necrosis in patients with
leptospirosis, treated by haemodialysis, haemoperfusion, or
haemodialysis/haemoperfusion**

Chr. Dimitrov, M. Nikova, L. Manuelli; District Hospital Bourgas, Haemodialysis Centre, Higher Institute of Chemical Technology, Bourgas

Leptospirosis was first detected as a cause of death in German soldiers during the Second World War in the region of Bourgas (Dr. Ostertag). The disease is endemic and often underestimated in regard to the dangerous, or fatal outcome.

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Figure 4. Abstracts of the first BANTAO Association Meeting, Varna, Bulgaria, 22-24 September 1995.

Selected abstracts of the first BANTAO Congress in Varna, Bulgaria, were also published in Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation: official publication of the European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association. (3)

Prof. F. Valderrábano, chairman of the EDTA – ERA Registry, at that time, wrote in Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation (1996) 11:70 (4): “Nephrologists of the Balkan countries meet across political frontiers and war fronts – an example to politicians! BANTAO: a new European medical association overcomes political obstacles.”

He wrote: “On September 22-24th, 1995, the constitution and first Congress of a new scientific association, called BANTAO, took place in Varna, Bulgaria. BANTAO stands for Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs.

“This is an extraordinary initiative of nephrologists working in cities throughout the Balkan countries who have been able to create a scientific association and to organize its first congress, despite the boundaries of war, the rupture of international relations and other serious political problems which emerged in the Balkan countries after the disappearance of the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

“Nephrologists from Varna, Sofia, Belgrade, Szeged, Niš, Timișoara, Ljubljana, Skopje, Izmir, Serres, Cluj-Napoca, Thessaloniki, Struga, Pleven, Istanbul, Kishinew, Miskolc, Bucharest and other cities of the Balkan Peninsula and surrounding countries met at this first congress and signed the constitution of the new association.

“The main goal of BANTAO is to promote scientific and technical cooperation in the field of renal diseases and artificial organs between the Balkan cities. This goal will be achieved not only through a periodical congress, but also through lecturers exchange, fellowship exchange, scientific research methods exchange, joint meetings and courses, publications and cooperation in the field of renal transplant.

“BANTAO wants to work closely with other international societies, especially with EDTA-ERA.

"This first Congress was organized under the coordination of Prof. D. Nenov and with the collaboration of Prof. Z. Kirjakov, President of the Bulgarian Society of Nephrology.

"BANTAO represents an extraordinary initiative and should receive both scientific and economic support from the EDTA-ERA. The exceptional effort of collaboration shown by our Balkan colleagues, who have been able to carry out scientific activities in extremely adverse human conditions, is an example to the European nephrological community, which should not hesitate to offer all possible help to this new association" (4).

The Second Congress of BANTAO was held from September 6th to 10th, 1997 in Struga, Republic of Macedonia.

The Second Congress of BANTAO was sponsored by the European Society for Artificial Organs (ESAO), the International Society for Artificial Organs (ISAO), the International Faculty for Artificial Organs (INFA) and the European Renal Association, European Dialysis and Transplant Association (ERA/EDTA). It was held in conjunction with the Second Congress of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs.

The Congress was attended by 130 physicians from the states of former Yugoslavia and 70 physicians from other Balkan countries. There were also a number of guests from Europe and the USA. Prof. M. Polenaković (Skopje) was the Congress President, Prof. H. Klinkmann (Dean of INFA) (Rostock) was the President of the Scientific Committee and Dr. A. Šikole (Skopje) the Secretary General. Prof. M. Polenaković and Prof. F. Berthoux wrote: "The main goal of BANTAO is to promote scientific and technical cooperation in the fields of renal disease and artificial organs between the regions on the Balkan Peninsula, to give an opportunity for exchange of experience and knowledge among the experts in the area and to engage in collaborative projects in order to demonstrate that cooperation is possible even on the turbulent Balkan Peninsula. The scientific programme consisted of 23 guest lectures and 54 oral and 80 poster presentations covering six topics, i.e. epidemiology of renal diseases, acute renal failure, renal replacement therapy, systemic disease, progress in nephrology and drugs and the kidney.

Nephrol Dial Transplant (1999) 14: 1026

Congress Report

**Nephrology
Dialysis
Transplantation**

BANTAO—Second Congress of the Balkan Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs, Struga, Republic of Macedonia, 6–8 September 1997

The second Congress of BANTAO was sponsored by the European Society for Artificial Organs (ESAO), International Society for Artificial Organs (ISAO), International Faculty for Artificial Organs (INFA) and the European Renal Association/European Dialysis and Transplant Association (ERA/EDTA). It was held in conjunction with the Second Congress of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs.

The congress was attended by 130 physicians from the states of former Yugoslavia and 70 physicians from other Balkan countries. There were also a number of guests from Europe and the USA. The congress was held under the patronage of the president of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr Kiro Gligorov, Prof. M. Polenakovic was the Congress President, Prof. H. Klinkmann (Dean of the INFA) was the President of the Scientific Committee and Dr A. Šikole the Secretary General. The main goal of BANTAO is to promote scientific and technical cooperation in the fields of renal disease and artificial organs between the regions on the Balkan Peninsula, to give an opportunity for exchange of experience and knowledge between the experts in the area and to engage in collaborative projects in order to demonstrate that cooperation is

possible even on the turbulent Balkan peninsula. The scientific programme consisted of 23 guest lectures, 54 oral and 80 poster presentations covering six topics, i.e. epidemiology of renal diseases, acute renal failure, renal replacement therapy, systemic disease, progress in nephrology and drugs and the kidney.

Guest speakers comprised H. Klinkmann (Glasgow), M. de Broe (Antwerp), E. Akoglu (Istanbul), G. Vayonas (Thessaloniki), O. Better (Israel), A. Mandal (USA), D. Falkenhagen (Krems), S. Stefoni (Bologna), Schulman (Nashville), Vienken (Oberursel), R. Vanholder (Ghent), Czachor (Dayton), F. Berthoux (St. Etienne), A. Basci (Izmir), S. Cameron (London), F. Valderrabano (Madrid), P. Schena (Bari), F. Kokot (Katowice), I. Ledebø (Lund), H. Kayser (Wuppertal), W. Gmelin (Bad Homburg), P. Scigalla (Mannheim).

The congress was a resounding success and it has therefore been decided to organize the next meeting in Belgrade in 1998 and in Izmir in 1999.

Prof. M. Polenakovic
Skopje, Macedonia
Prof. F. Berthoux
St. Etienne, France

Figure 5. Report of the Second BANTAO Congress, Struga, 6-8 September 1997

“The Congress was a resounding success, and it has therefore been decided to organize the next meeting in Belgrade in 1998 and in Izmir in 1999” (5).

The presented papers were published in the Proceedings of the 2nd Congress of BANTAO (6).

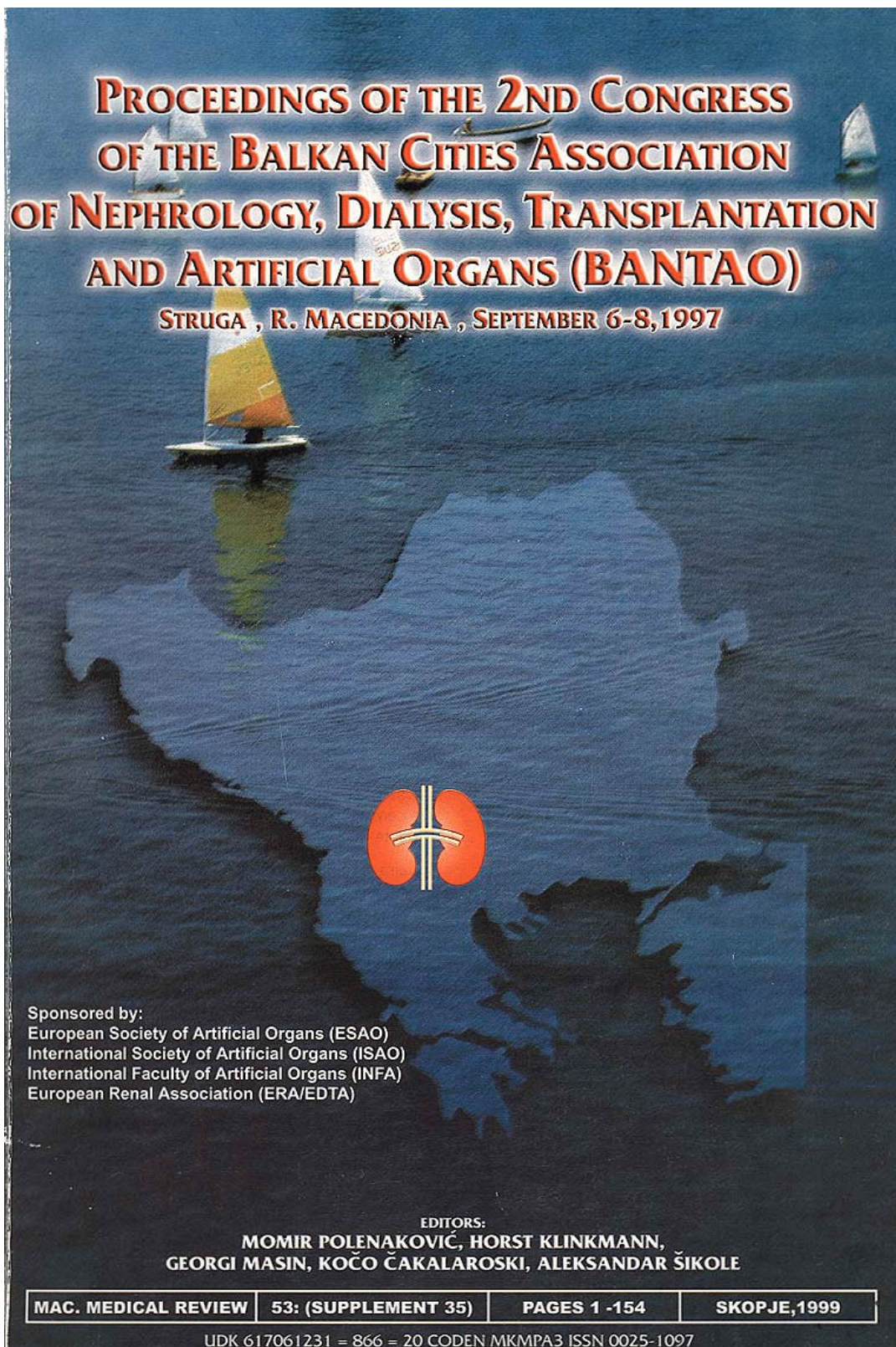


Figure 6. Proceedings of the 2nd BANTAO Congress, Struga, Republic of Macedonia, 6-8 September 1997.

The Third BANTAO Congress was held in conjunction with the sixth Yugoslav Congress of Nephrology in Belgrade from September 18th to 20th, 1998. The President of the Congress was Prof. Lj. Djukanović (Belgrade) and the Secretaries were Dr. V. Lezaić and B. Stojmirović (Belgrade).

The main topics were: renal replacement therapy in the BANTAO region, the role of auxiliary therapy in chronic renal failure and tubulointerstitial disorders and diseases. A Post-Congress symposium was devoted to Balkan endemic nephrology.

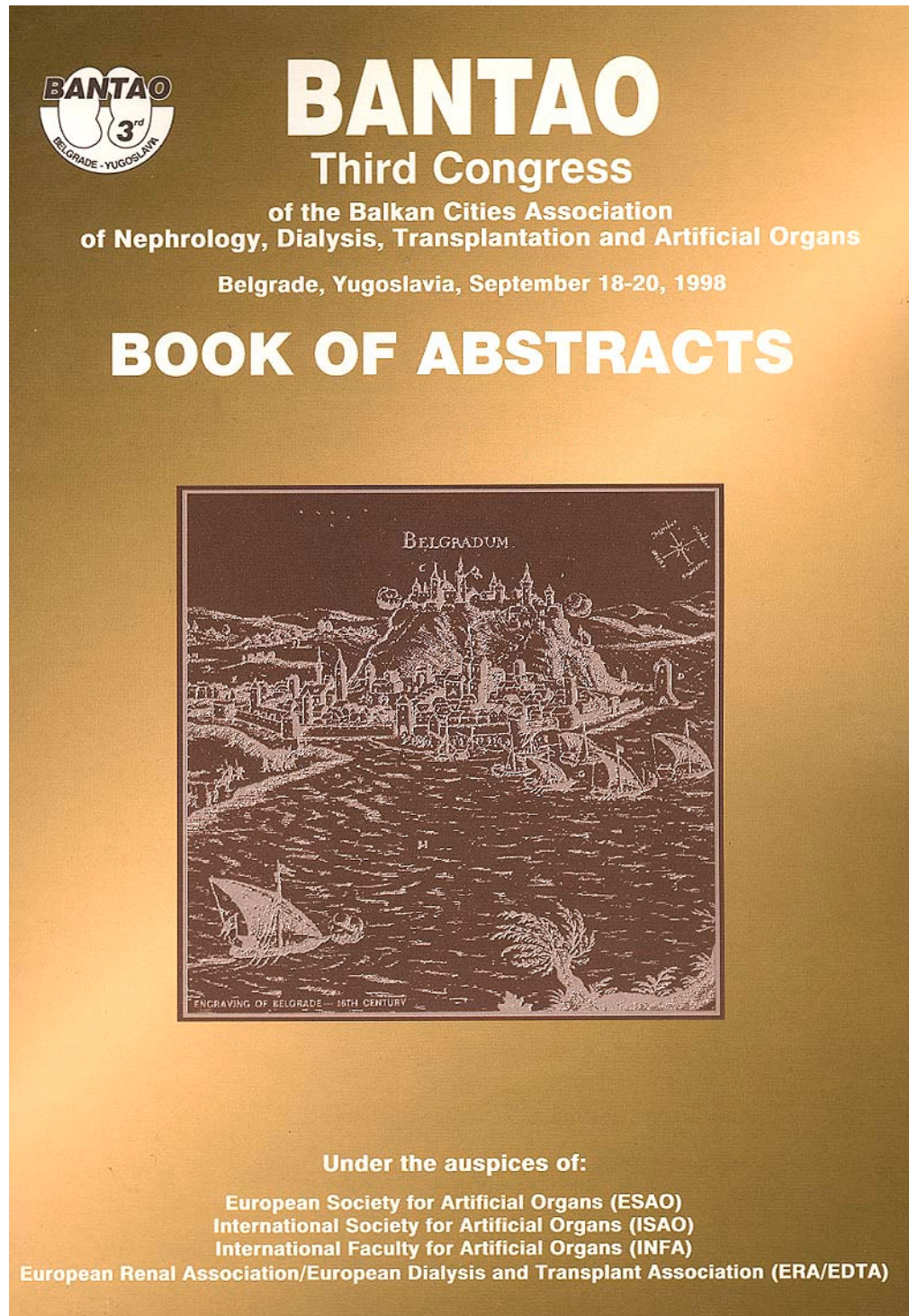
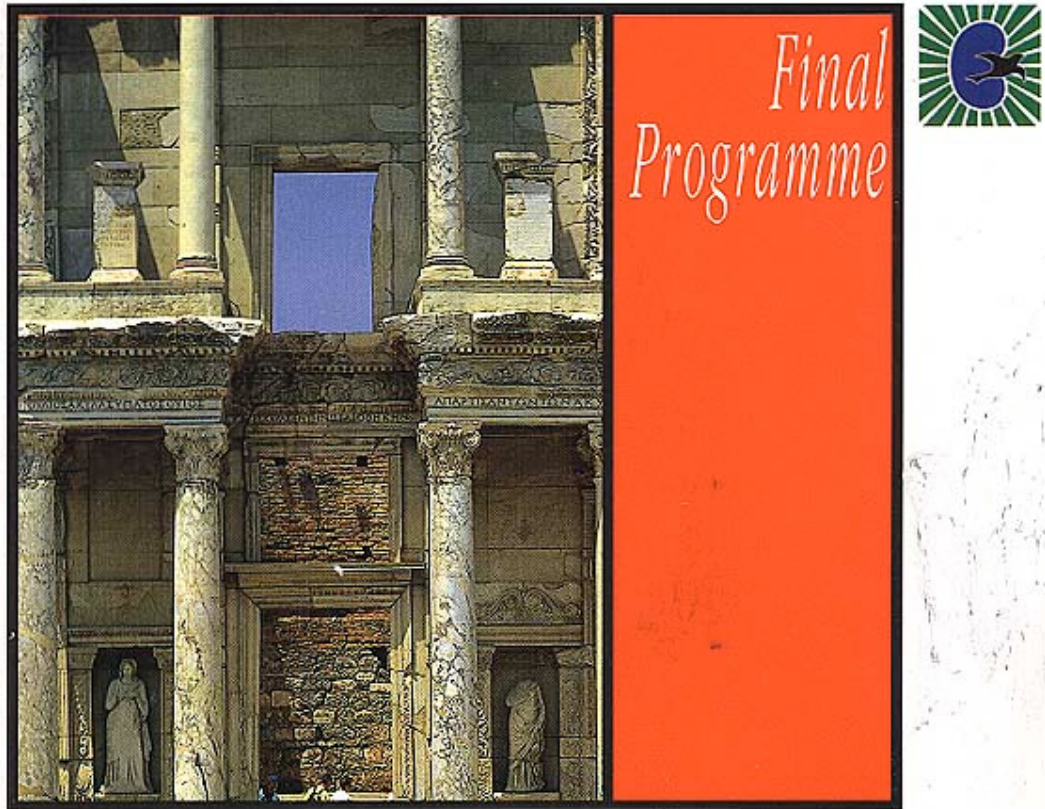


Figure 7. Book of Abstracts of the Third BANTAO Congress, Belgrade, 18-20 September 1998

The Fourth Congress of BANTAO in conjunction with the 16th Congress of the Turkish National Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Hypertension Society was held in Izmir, Turkey from 14th to 16th November 1999. Prof. Dr. Ali Basci (Izmir) was Secretary and Prof. Dr. F. Akcicek (Izmir) was the President of the Congress.

Symposia about the Marmara (north-western Turkey) earthquake attracted great attention. The issues of collaboration in the disaster; to be a nephrologist in the disaster field; acute renal failure in the crush syndrome and nephrology in the intensive care unit were well accepted by the participants in the Congress.

The Congress was a further success of the Association. Sharing of personal experiences and problems, mutual contacts improved friendship between nephrologists from the Balkan countries.



**Fourth Congress of Balkan Cities Association
of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and
Artificial Organs (BANTAO) in conjunction with 16th**

**Congress of the Turkish National Nephrology,
Dialysis, Transplantation and Hypertension**

14-18 November 1999, Hotel Büyük Efes, İzmir, Türkiye



Figure 8. Final Programme of the Fourth BANTAO Congress, Izmir, Turkey, 14-18 November 1999

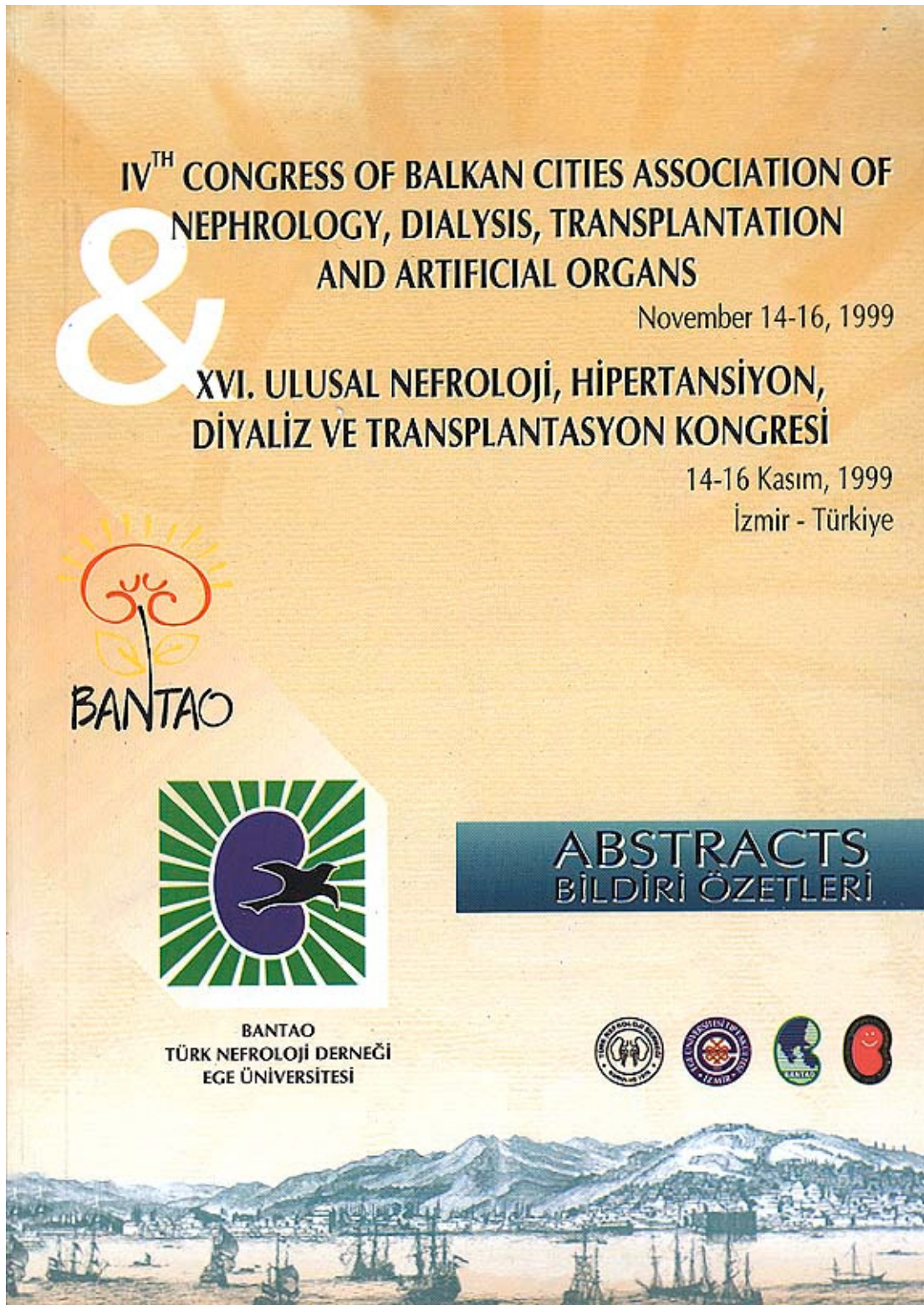


Figure 9. Book of Abstracts of the Fourth BANTAO Congress, Izmir, Turkey, 14-18 November 1999

The 5th Congress of BANTAO was held in Thessaloniki from September 30th to October 3rd, 2001. Prof. Dr. Ch. P. Stathakis (Athens) was the President of the Congress, and J. N. Boletis (Athens) and N. Dombros (Thessaloniki) were the secretaries. The Congress was a great success.

The aim of the scientific programme of the congress was twofold. Firstly, to meet the needs for continuing education, and secondly, to up-date the participants on current trends and future progress in the fields of adult and pediatric clinical nephrology, dialysis, transplantation, hypertension, therapeutic apheresis and urinary tract infections.

Seventy-two lectures were presented, 59 of which were published in a special supplement to *Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation*: Official Publication of ERA/EDTA (7). In total 250 abstracts were submitted and approximately 600 participants attended the Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT

BANTAO
5th Congress
of the Balkan Cities
Association of Nephrology
Dialysis, Transplantation
and Artificial Organs

Sept. 30 - Oct. 3, 2001

THESSALONIKI
Hellas

Figure 10. Main Announcement, Fifth BANTAO Congress, Thessaloniki, Greece, 30th September-3rd October 2001

Prof. Ch. P. Stathakis and colleagues published a special newspaper - Medical Report with BANTAO News – and informed all participants about the work of the Congress.



ISSN: 1109-2602

CONGRESS NEWS

MEDICAL Report



BANTAO

5th CONGRESS OF THE BALKAN CITIES ASSOCIATION OF NEPHROLOGY DIALYSIS, TRANSPLANTATION AND ARTIFICIAL ORGANS

Thessaloniki, September 30 - October 3, 2001

On behalf of the Organizing Committee of the 5th BANTAO Congress, I have the pleasure to invite you all to Thessaloniki (September 30-October 3, 2001).

Following the successful meetings in Varna (1995), Struga (1997), Belgrade (1998) and Izmir (1999), the BANTAO Congress has been now established as the major forum of Balkan nephrologists indicative of our will to share our scientific experiences and difficulties, our achievements and failures. It is obvious that the BANTAO Council has succeeded its initial targets.

Furthermore, nowadays the necessity to come to know each other is compulsory. Now more than ever we have to learn what joins us, to renew old and new acquaintances and to strengthen our peaceful relationships. It is within this "BANTAO spirit" that Thessaloniki will welcome all participants of the 5th Congress.

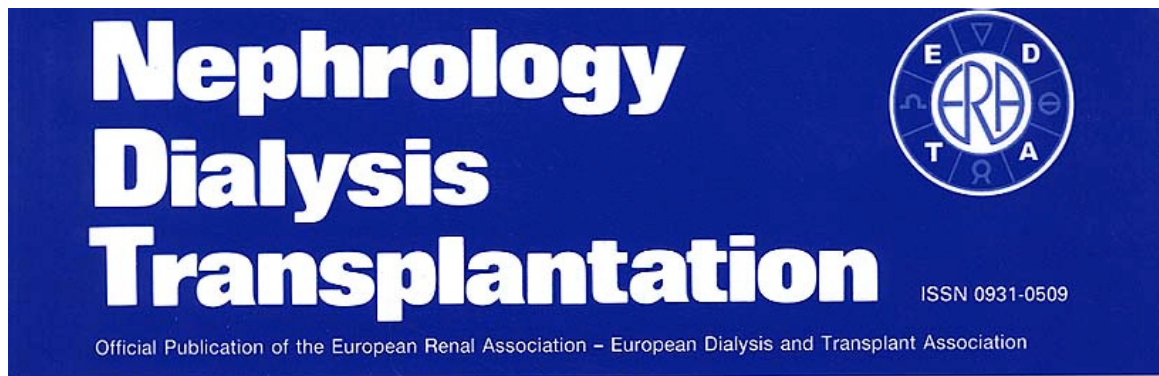
In appreciation to the honor made by the BANTAO Council to choose Thessaloniki as the hosting city of the 5th BANTAO Congress, the Organizing Committee and the Hellenic Society of Nephrology will make every effort towards a most successful and memorable event. We are particularly grateful to the International Advisory Committee and to the Scientific Committee of the 5th BANTAO Congress, as well as to the distinguished colleagues from Europe and America, who responded to our invitation to participate, deliver Lectures and contribute to State of the Art Seminars and Round Tables, which are the cornerstone of the Scientific Program.

Furthermore, we believe that the Oral and Poster Presentation Sessions are the podium not only for presenting our scientific work, but also for knowing better each other and initiating friendships and collaborations. The submission of abstracts will be the best evidence towards that.

The Organizing Committee is particularly grateful to the Hellenic Society of Nephrology, ERA-EDTA, ISN, ISN/COMGAN, Joint Action Nephrology in Eastern Europe (ISN and ERA-EDTA), ESAO, INFA and ISAO, which so generously put the Congress under their Auspices. Finally, we wholeheartedly express our thanks to the sponsors of the Congress whose contributions make possible our effort for a high level meeting. Looking forward to welcoming you all in Thessaloniki.

Charalambos P. Stathakis, MD
President, 5th BANTAO Congress
Director, Department of Nephrology "Gr. Vosnides", "Laiko" General Hospital

Figure 11. Medical Report, Fifth BANTAO Congress



Volume 16 (2001) • Supplement 6

EXPANDING THE PROSPECTS OF NEPHROLOGY
IN THE BALKAN PENINSULA

The Fifth Congress of the Balkan Cities Association for Nephrology,
Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (BANTAO)

September 30–October 3, 2001
Thessaloniki, Greece

Editors

Ch. P. Stathakis
J. N. Boletis
N. Dombros
N. Lameire

Publication supported by a grant from Medical Products Ltd, Greece

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Figure 12. Expanding the prospects of nephrology in the Balkan Peninsula

The 6th Congress of BANTAO was held for the second time in Varna from 6th to 9th October 2003 under the presidency of Prof. Dr. D. Nenov (Varna). More than 400 medical doctors from 72 Balkan cities participated in the work of the congress presenting 343 abstracts.

*For the first time there were published two issues of the **BANTAO Journal** with the abstracts, extended abstracts and invited lectures (Proceedings) of the Congress (8, 9). The publication **BANTAO Journal** is very important for the growth of the Association. This Congress was also very successful (10).*



BANTAO

6th Congress
of the Balkan Cities
Association of Nephrology
Dialysis, Transplantation
and Artificial Organs

6-9 October, 2003
VARNA, Bulgaria

www.bantao.org

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AND CORRESPONDENCE**

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Figure 13. Third Announcement, Sixth BANTAO Congress, Varna, Bulgaria, 6-9 October 2003



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Figure 14. BANTAO Journal

Despite the difficulties imposed by major events, such as devastating wars and catastrophic earthquakes in many countries of the Balkan Peninsula, the Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (BANTAO) has made considerable progress. Following the first six successful congresses: Varna (1995), Struga (1997), Belgrade (1998), Izmir (1996), Thessaloniki (2001), and Varna (2003), the BANTAO Congress was established as the major scientific and institutional forum for Balkan nephrologists, with its own journal, indicating our will to communicate, to collaborate, to get to know each other and to share our difficulties. More than a professional event, the BANTAO Congress became a cultural phenomenon, through which we discovered that we have many more things in common than we previously thought, and that we must take every advantage now of being able to live and communicate in a world without political

boundaries. Till now, the BANTAO Council has managed, in a spirit of peace, friendship and collaboration, to continuously strengthen this association and, moreover, to make it a reputable part of the European and international ones. In this spirit the Constitution of BANTAO has already been created.

It was decided the BANTAO Congress would be held every two years in a different Balkan country and in a different city.

The 7th Congress of BANTAO will be held in Ohrid from 8th to 11th September 2005 under the presidency of Prof. Dr. M. Polenaković (Skopje). The Organising Committee of the 7th BANTAO Congress, the presidents of the Scientific Committee - Prof. H. Klinkmann and Prof. Ch. P. Stathakis – are very gratified to see the increased attention that has been paid to this 7th BANTAO Congress. This interest in the 2005 Ohrid Congress is outstanding.



Figure 15. Main Announcement, Seventh BANTAO Congress, Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia, 8-11 September 2005.

270 abstracts have been accepted, 43 for oral presentation (free communications) and the remaining 227 for poster presentations. We have 43 invited guest lecturers in the fields (sections) of the Epidemiology of Renal Disease, Basic Science, Clinical Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs. Ten symposia will present the latest achievements in specific nephrology fields.

The uremic toxicity group EUTox, under the umbrella of ESAO, will contribute to the congress with a round table entitled **An update on uremic toxicity**.

At this 7th BANTAO Congress there will be for the first time a CME Course organized by ERA/EDTA and ISN/COMGAN entitled **Frontiers in Nephrology** with seven distinguished speakers.

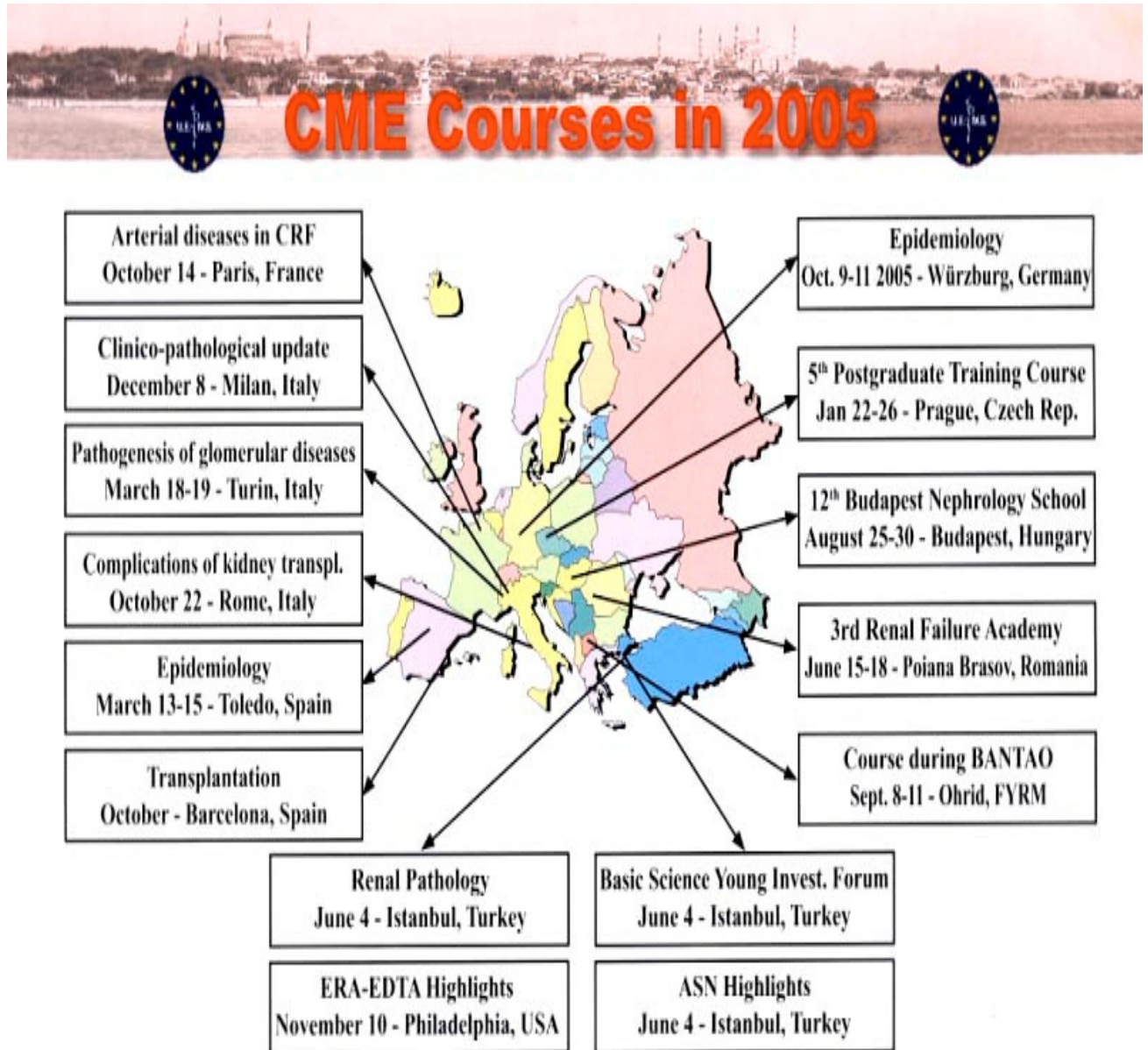


Figure 16. CME Courses in 2005

Two issues of the **BANTAO Journal** for 2005 (Vol.3, Nos. 1 and 2) with abstracts and extended abstracts have been published (11).



Official Publication of the Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology,
Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs

ABSTRACT BOOK



Volume 3
Issue 1
July 2005

**7-th BANTAO Congress of the Balkan Cities
Association of Nephrology, Dialysis,
Transplantation and Artificial Organs,
September 8-11, 2005, Ohrid**

Published by Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs

Figure 17. BANTAO Journal, Abstract Book, 7th BANTAO
Congress, September 8-11, 2005, Ohrid

The congress is focused on several topics, as for example:

- *How to improve the Balkan renal registry?*
- *Prevention in nephrology;*
- *Prevention of progression of renal disease;*
- *Understanding renal fibrosis; and*
- *Kidney transplantation on the Balkan Peninsula.*

We believe that mutual collaboration among nephrologists from the Balkan Peninsula in the spirit of BANTAO will improve the early diagnosis of renal diseases and the treatment and rehabilitation of renal patients, and solve some of the above-mentioned issues.

It is unfortunately not possible to mention all the individuals, all the events and all the achievements of the members of BANTAO here.

We would like to thank all of you and other colleagues for your support for the development of nephrology on the Balkan Peninsula and for BANTAO's ideas.



Figure 18. Presidents of BANTAO (from the left: Ch. P. Stathakis, Lj. Djukanovic, M. Polenakovic, D. Nenov and A. Basci)

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