

The dream is now a reality - The seventh Congress of the Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (BANTAO) Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia, 8-11 September 2005

The 7th BANTAO Congress was held from 8th to 11th September 2005 in Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia. Ohrid is also the place where BANTAO was born in October 9th, 1993.

The main goal of BANTAO is to promote scientific and technical cooperation in the fields of renal disease and artificial organs among the Balkan cities, giving an opportunity for exchange of experience and knowledge among the experts in the area and to engage them in collaborative projects in order to demonstrate that cooperation is possible even on the turbulent Balkan Peninsula.

Following the first six successful congresses: Varna (1995), Belgrade (1998), Izmir (1999), Thessaloniki (2001) and Varna (2003), the BANTAO Congress was established as the major and institutional forum for Balkan nephrologists, with its own journal including our will to communicate, to collaborate, to get to know each other and to share our difficulties. More than just 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 now take every advantage of being able to live and to communicate in a world without political boundaries. At present, 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.

The Congress was attended by 570 physicians from the Balkan Peninsula cities as well as from Europe and USA. The Congress was held under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, Prof. M. Polenakovic was the Congress President and Doc. G. Spasovski the Secretary General.

In the fields of the Epidemiology of Renal Disease, Basic Science, Clinical Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs we had 43 invited guest lectures, 42 oral and 223 poster presentations.

The Congress was focused on several topics for example: how to improve the Balkan renal registry, prevention in nephrology, prevention of progression of renal diseases, understanding renal fibrosis and kidney transplantation on the Balkan Peninsula.

Companies invited speakers presented in six symposia, one workshop and three mini lectures their latest achievements in specific fields of nephrology, especially in dialysis.

R. Vanholder, A. Perna, J. Jankowski and A. Argiles, on behalf of ESAO/EUTOX group, presented: *An update on uremic toxicity- the role of EUTOX*. D. Kerjaschki and H. Regele presented clinico-pathological correlation in renal transplant patients.

For the first time at this 7th BANTAO Congress we organized *CME Course - Frontiers in nephrology*, sponsored by ERA/EDTA and ISN/COMGAN. Six distinguished speakers: F. Locatelli, J. Mann, J. Floege, T. Risler, A. Wiecek, and M. Klinger presented the newest achievements in their fields.

The abstracts were published in BANTAO Journal Vol. 3 (1), 2005, pp 1-121, editor G. Spasovski as *Abstract Book* and 50 papers from the Congress in the BANTAO Journal Vol. 3 (2), 2005, pp 1-160, as *Proceedings* of the 7th BANTAO Congress, editors G. Spasovski and M. Polenakovic. A. Basci (Izmir) was elected Editor in Chief. A. Covic (Iasi) and G. Spasovski (Skopje) were elected as deputy editors.

The 7th Congress of BANTAO, Ohrid, was a resounding success and confirmed our good will for mutual collaboration and friendship, so we can say our dream is now a reality.

M. Polenakovic was elected President of BANTAO Association. The next - 8th BANTAO Congress will be held in Belgrade in 2007. Prof. Ms. V. Nestic was elected as President of the Congress.

M. Polenakovic
G. Spasovski