CONGRESS REPORT FROM HIGHLY SCIENTIFIC NEPHROLOGY CONGRESSES IN THE BALKANS, 15th BANTAO AND 6th MSNDDAO CONGRESS

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ABSTRACT

In the period from 26th until 29th of September 2019, the 15th BANTAO Congress (Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs) in conjunction with the 6th Congress of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (MSNDDAO) was held in Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia, hosted by the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MASA). MSNDDAO was created in 1992 and the First Congress of the MSNDDAO was held on 9th October 1993 in Ohrid when, also, the Balkan Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (BANTAO) was established, as the only professional association of this kind in the Balkans and Southern Europe. Since then, MSNDDAO has been very active in education and collaboration with BANTAO, the European Renal Association (ERA-EDTA) and the International Society of Nephrology (ISN). The 15th BANTAO and the 6th MSNDDAO Congress were highly professional events in honor of the 80th anniversary of Academician Momir Polenakovic from the Republic of North Macedonia, one of the founders of BANTAO and MSNDDAO, who was unselfishly dedicated to the education and guidance for many generations of young doctors in this region. This year's Congress was endorsed by the ERA-EDTA, and supported by the ISN. On the first day of the Congress, a European Renal Best Practice (ERBP) session was held, in which the Chair of the ERBP Working Group, Prof. Dr. Jonathan Fox gave a comprehensive insight of the purpose and aims of ERBP, the methods used for their achievement, and an overview of the recently produced and guidelines in development. The second day was organized in four sessions: Clinical nephrology and renal registries; CKD Diagnosis, comorbidities and treatment; Kidney transplantation and Acute and chronic renal failure management. On the third congress day, the ISN CME Course with ERA-EDTA endorsement was held. The course was entitled "Possibility of diagnosis and treatment of the CKD progression and complications/Possibility of diagnosis and treatment of the CKD progression – current perspective" and was chaired by Prof. Dr. Caskey Fergus and Prof. Dr. Serhan Tuglular. On the last Congress day, before the official closure and the best wishes from the President of the Congress, Prof. Dr. Goce Spasovski, a session about CKD and the renal replacement therapy complications was held. This event was of an exceptional importance for the region, considering the charred international achievements and the most up-to-date methods used in the Nephrology field, bringing out continuous quality improvement in the treatment of patients with renal diseases.

Keywords: Congress, BANTAO, ISN, CME course

In the period from 26th until 29th of September 2019, the 15th BANTAO Congress (Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs) in conjunction with the 6th Congress of the Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (MSNDTAO) was held in Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia. The Congress was hosted by the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MASA), which premises were very appropriate for the scientific level of the whole event. Alongside, there was the South Eastern European Pediatric Nephrology Working Group (SEPNWG) scientific session as part of the whole event, emphasizing the challenges that our youngest patients are facing and presenting new treatment options for this most vulnerable population.

The Balkan Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (BANTAO) was established in Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia, on 9th October 1993, as the only professional association of this kind in the Balkans and Southern Europe. The main goal of the BANTAO was to promote scientific and technical cooperation for renal diseases and artificial organs among the cities from the Balkans and with the international nephrology community. It was important to create opportunities for the exchange of expert experience and knowledge, and to take part in collaborative projects. The first BANTAO Congress was held in Varna, Bulgaria from 22 to 24 September 1995, and from that year the Congress had been held every two years, and from 2017 every year. Since 2005, the congresses have been followed by CME courses supported by the ERA-EDTA and/or the ISN. The congresses have succeeded in raising the nephrology knowledge and in increasing the standards of the nephrology patient care throughout the Balkans. In 2003, alongside this association, the first issue of the BANTAO journal was published, which has further enhanced the collaboration between the medical communities in this region.

The Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (MSNDTAO) was created in 1992. The first Congress of the MSNDTAO was held on 9th October 1993 and from that time the Society has been very active in education and in collaboration with BANTAO, the European Renal Association (ERA-EDTA) and the International Society of Nephrology (ISN). Since its creation MSNDTAO has had a history of very successful National Congresses, many sections and international meetings with nephrologists from the

neighboring and the countries from the South East Europe, exchanging knowledge and updating the current information on specific topics. MSNDTAO is also an initiator of the foundation of BANTAO.

The 15th BANTAO and the 6th MSNDTAO Congress were highly professional events in honor of the 80th anniversary of Academician Prof. Dr. Momir Polenakovic from Republic of North Macedonia. Academician Polenakovic is one of the founders of BANTAO and MSNDTAO, who was unselfishly dedicated to education and guidance for many generations of young doctors in this region.

This year's Congress was endorsed by the ERA-EDTA (European Renal Association-European Dialysis and Transplant Association), and supported by the International Society of Nephrology (ISN). The ISN CME Course with ERA-EDTA endorsement that followed on Day 3 of this professional event raised great interest from the participants and the evaluation feedback was with the highest scores.

The Scientific Committee of the Congress paid great attention to various topics in the field of Nephrology and treatment of chronic renal disease. Around 250 participants (Nephrologist, Researchers, Medical and Other Trainees - Including residents, graduate students, post-docs, and fellows of the region, health care professionals interested in nephrology, dialysis, transplantation, and artificial organs) from 15 countries from the region and abroad attended the Congress. The main topics that were discussed, throughout state of the art presentations and mini lectures included Clinical Nephrology, Hypertension, Nephrolithiasis, Urinary tract infections, Adult dominant polycystic kidney disease, Prevention and treatment of Chronic Kidney Disease, and Renal Replacement Therapy (Hemodialysis, Peritoneal Dialysis, Kidney Transplantation). In depth knowledge exchange within dedicated sessions were the chapters on Vascular Accesses (creation, surveillance and management of complications, both medical and surgical), Immunosuppressive treatment in Clinical nephrology and Kidney transplantation, etc. The participants had an opportunity to listen 47 well known and distinguished international experts and scientists as invited speakers, from different parts of the Balkans and worldwide including Belgium, Czech Republic, Romania, Japan and United Kingdom. The four-day event also included 14 free communications, 56 e-poster presentations, and sponsored 3 mini symposiums. Review of active participants per engagement are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Engaged active participants per country*

Country	# Invited lectures	# Free communications	# Poster presentations
Albania	4		10
Belgium	2		
Germany		1	
Greece	6	6	4
Croatia	4	2	5
Czech Republic	1		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4	1	1
Romania	2		3
Japan	1		
Montenegro	1		
Serbia	5	1	2
Slovenia	2		2
Turkey	4		4
UK	2		
N. Macedonia	9	3	25

DAILY REPORT - DAY 1

At the first day of the Congress, a European Renal Best Practice (ERBP) session was held in which the Chair of the ERBP Working Group, Prof. Dr. Jonathan Fox gave a comprehensive insight of the purpose and aims of ERBP, methods used for their achievement, and an overview of the recent and guidelines in development. He concluded that ERBP is the guidance body of ERA-EDTA; they want to be as transparent and unbiased as possible; they strive to achieve the

highest standards of guideline/guidance development; their aim is to produce documents that are relevant to their stakeholders and useful in improving the outcomes for patients with kidney disease; and their willingness to welcome involvement of individuals and national societies of ERA-EDTA member countries. Dr. Evi Nagler, the Vice-chair of the Board of ERBP Working Group, talked about the latest guidelines (2019) for management of elderly patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) and introduction of the latest clinical practice guidelines on peri- and post-operative care of arteriovenous fistulas and grafts for hemodialysis in adults.

Fig 1. *Prof. Dr. Jonathan Fox presenting his talk regarding ISN*

During the official welcoming ceremony, along presentation about the history and many achievements of the both Associations, BANTAO and MSNDTAO, a few awards of recognition were delivered. The current President of the BANTAO Society, Prof. Dr. Halima Resic from the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina received the ISN Pioneering Award for the Eastern and Central European Region for 2019 from Fergus Caskey for her vital role in the development and career-long commitment in improving nephrology in this region.

Prof. Dr. Horst Klinkmann had a speech in honor of the 80th Anniversary and 60 years of Excellence of Academician Prof. Dr. Momir Polenakovic. He referred on his great scientific experience acquired in the work with kidney patients, and after the visit to the most renowned nephrology centers in Europe and the world, he has transferred it to his colleagues throughout their mutual work within the medical units and nephrology associations. The work of the Associa-

tions was in fact a successful education of around 1.000 students, post graduate and post docs colleagues. Among his most distinguished positions, apart from being a founder and President of the MSNDTAO, President of the Yugoslav Society of Nephrology, founder and President of BANTAO, are also, the member of the ESAO and ERA-EDTA Boards. Academician Polenakovic is author of around 480 original articles, editorials, reviews and chapters; several books and book chapters; 7 research projects with partners from abroad; 14 national research projects; 31 Honorary Memberships, Degrees, Presidency and plenty of other recognitions and awards for his work achievements.

Additionally, the President of the Congress, Prof. Dr. Goce Spasovski from Republic of North Macedonia, awarded three renowned international experts with the BANTAO award, Academician Prof. Dr. Momir Polenakovic, Prof. Dr. Horst Klinkmann and Prof. Dr. Raymond Vanholder, for their outstanding support of the Association and the whole region.

Fig. 2. *Opening of the BANTAO Congress*

Fig. 3. *Prof. Dr. Goce Spasovski giving the BANTAO award to Academician Prof. Dr. Momir Polenakovic*

Fig. 4. Prof. Dr. Goce Spasovski giving the BANTAO award to Prof. Dr. Horst Klinkmann

DAILY REPORT – DAY 2

The second day was organized in four sessions: Clinical nephrology and renal registries; CKD Diagnosis, comorbidities and treatment; Kidney transplantation and Acute and chronic renal failure management, where the renowned invited lecturers presented their lectures. Additionally, two sponsored mini symposiums were held, and the first 6 interesting free communications were presented.

DAILY REPORT – DAY 3

On the third congress day, the ISN CME Course with ERA-EDTA endorsement was held (Image 4 Participants carefully following the topics of the CME course). The course was entitled “Possibility of diagnosis and treatment of the CKD progression and complications/Possibility of diagnosis and treatment of the CKD progression - current perspective” and chaired by Caskey Fergus and Serhan Tuglular. The selection of the topic was based on the fact that CKD is associated with an increased risk for a variety of clinical comorbidities, so it would be an imperative to employ effective strategies to slow down the progression earlier in the course of the disease. Efforts to identify those who are at greater risk for disease progression are complicated by the myriad factors that may be involved. It is important to screen people with an early evidence of diabetes or

hypertension as a rational strategy. Many knowledge gaps exist and an additional research is needed to improve our ability to adequately screen for, monitor, and/or treat CKD. It is likely that newer treatment strategies employed may be helpful. Given that 11% of the adult population has an early evidence of CKD, and that it is associated with increased cardiovascular disease and mortality, a greater attention and focus is needed for tailoring optimal treatment strategies. The pediatric session was dedicated on renal replacement therapy and its complications. The third well-attended industry symposium provided an update on the most challenging problems and strategies for achieving the best outcomes in patients’ treatment and their management.

DAILY REPORT – DAY 4

Finally, on the last day of the Congress, before the official closure and best wishes from the President of the Congress, a session about CKD and renal replacement therapy complications was held. The last 8 speakers presented in the second part of the free communication session.

CONCLUSIONS

This event was of an exceptional importance for the region, considering that charred internation-

al achievements and the most up-to-date methods used in the Nephrology field. The rich variety of speakers and activities provided fresh impetus for advancements in education as well. We are also confident, that we'll further proceed with our well established BANTAO spirit or even get stronger bonds among us all who share the common goal of improvement in the Nephrology sphere. Thus, we'll be able to propose to our health decision-makers the introduction of proven state of the art procedures

in the prevention and treatment of kidney diseases that will further improve the quality of life of our patients. We have tried to provide learning opportunities from experts, but also we invited many colleagues from the region to actively participate in sharing their clinical experience and research. This meeting is expected to bring out continuous quality improvement in the treatment of patients with renal diseases being qualitatively valued with 20 CME points from UEMS accreditation services.

Резиме

ИЗВЕШТАЈ ОД КОНГРЕСОТ ЗА ВИСОКИ НАУЧНИ НЕФРОЛОШКИ КОНГРЕСИ НА БАЛКАНОТ, 15-ТИ КОНГРЕС НА БАНТАО И 6-ТИ КОНГРЕС МЗНДТВО

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Во период од 26 до 29 септември 2019 г. се одржа 15. Конгрес на БАНТАО (Балканска асоцијација за нефрологија, дијализа, трансплантација и артифицијални органи) заедно со 6. Конгрес на Македонското здружение за нефрологија, дијализа, трансплантација и артифициелни органи (МЗНДТАО) во Скопје, Република Северна Македонија, во просториите на Македонската академија на науките и уметности (МАНУ). МЗНДТАО е креирано во 1992 г., а Првиот конгрес на МЗНДТАО беше одржан на 9 октомври 1993 г. во Охрид, кога, исто така, е етаблирана Балканска асоцијација за нефрологија, дијализа, трансплантација и артифициелни органи (БАНТАО), како единствена професионална асоцијација од овој вид на Балканот и во Јужна Европа. Оттогаш МЗНДТВО е многу активно во едукација и во соработка со БАНТАО, Европската ренална асоцијација (ЕРА-ЕДТА) и Меѓународното здружение за нефрологија (ИЗН). 15. Конгрес на БАНТАО и 6. Конгрес на МЗНДТАО беа високо професионални настани во чест на 80-годишнината на академик Момир Поленаковиќ од Република Северна Македонија, еден од основачите на БАНТАО и на МЗНДТАО, кој беше несебично посветен на едукација и водење на многу генерации на млади доктори во регионот. Овојгодишниот конгрес беше уважен од ЕРА-ЕДТА и поддржан од ИЗН. На првиот ден на конгресот беше одржана сесија на групата за Европска ренална најдобра практика (ЕРНП), на која претседавачот на групата, проф. д-р Џонатан Фокс, даде опширен увид во намерата и целите на ЕРНП, користените методи за нивно постигнување и преглед на тековните активности и на насоките во развојот. Вториот ден беше организиран во четири сесии: клиничка нефрологија и ренални регистри; хронична бубрежна болест (ХББ) – дијагноза, коморбидитети и третман; бубрежна трансплантација и третман на акутната и хронична бубрежна слабост. На третиот ден на конгресот се одржа курсот ИЗН КМЕ со поткрепа на ЕРА-ЕДТА. Курсот „Можност за дијагноза и третман на прогресијата на ХББ и компликации / Можност за дијагноза и третман на прогресијата на ХББ-тековна перспектива“ беше под претседателство на проф. д-р Фергус Каскеј и проф. д-р Серхан Туглулар. На последниот ден на конгресот, пред официјалното затворање и поздрав од претседателот на конгресот, проф. д-р Гоце Спасовски, се одржа сесијата за ХББ и компликации од бубрежната заместителна терапија. Овој настан беше од исклучителна важност за регионот, имајќи ги предвид споделените меѓународни постигнувања и најновите користени методи во областа на нефрологијата, кои донесуваат континуирано подобрување на квалитетот на третман на пациентите со бубрежни заболувања..

Клучни зборови: конгрес, БАНТАО, ИЗН, КМЕ курс