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## PIONEERS OF PEDIATRIC SURGERY IN NOVI SAD

### *PIONIRI DEČJE HIRURGIJE U NOVOM SADU*

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#### Summary

**Introduction.** Until the mid-twentieth century, children with surgical conditions in Novi Sad were treated at the City Hospital, along with adult patients. The idea of establishing the pediatric surgery service came from Dr. Nestor Teodorović, but his idea was embraced and developed by Dr. Vladimir Jakovljević. In 1956, the Department of Pediatric Surgery was founded, and Dr. Dušan Jovanović, a young specialist, was the head of the department. As the number of children patients was growing, the need for organisational separation of pediatric surgery grew as well. In 1959, the Department of Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics was founded, with 55 beds. **Pioneers.** Dr. Dušan Jovanović remained the head of the department, and Dr. Mirosljub Vidaković started his specialization in pediatric surgery. Over the following years, seven more doctors began their specialist training: Dr. Dušan Pajić in 1962, Dr. Slobodan Petrović in 1963, Dr. Stanislav Stojanović, Dr. Branislava Savić Kozomorić, Dr. Živorad Jocić in 1965, and two years later Dr. Božidar Rašić and Dr. Velimir Stojanović. The young specialists initiated new pediatric surgical disciplines: neonatal surgery, urology and thoracic surgery, with 70 beds. The professional surgical team consisted of surgeons and anesthesiologists: Prim. Dr. Klara Gašpar Klopka, Prim. Dr. Đerđi Terek Turajlija and Dr. Olga Grozdanova. In 1977, pediatric surgery was integrated with other pediatric health services, and the Pediatric Surgery Department became the Pediatric Surgery Clinic and was moved into a new purpose built building of the Institute for Mother and Child Health Care. At present, the Pediatric Surgery Clinic in Novi Sad, a tertiary health care institution, is located at the Institute for Child and Youth Health Care of Vojvodina, as a specialized regional center. It has five operating theatres, employing 36 doctors, specialists and subspecialists in surgery and anesthesiology. The pioneer generation had established high professional standards, core values and a deep belief in the dignity of hard work and true commitment.

**Key words:** Pediatricians; Surgeons; History of Medicine; Hospitals, Pediatric; History, 20th Century

#### Introduction

Until the mid-twentieth century, children with surgical conditions in Novi Sad were treated at the

#### Sažetak

**Uvod.** Do sredine dvadesetog veka, u Novom Sadu, deca sa hirurškim oboljenjima i povredama lečena su u Gradskoj bolnici, gde i odrasli bolesnici. Ideja o osnivanju službe dečje hirurgije potekla je od dr Nestora Teodorovića ali je zaživela i ostvarena tek kada je dr Vladimir Jakovljević došao na mesto načelnika hirurgije u bolnici. Uz razumevanje i pomoć starijih kolega, 1957. godine dr Dušan Jovanović, specijalista dečji hirurg osniva Odsek za dečju hirurgiju i ortopediju sa 55 postelja jer broj malih pacijenata raste i nastaje potreba za izdvajanjem odeljenja kao posebne celine. **Pioniri.** Na specijalizaciju iz dečje hirurgije 1959. godine dolazi dr Mirosljub Vidaković, 1962. dr Dušan Pajić, 1963. dr Slobodan Petrović, dve godine kasnije dr Stanislav Stojanović, dr Branislava Savić Kozomorić, dr Živorad Jocić, a potom dr Božidar Rašić i dr Velimir Stojanović. Pristizanjem mladih specijalista razvijaju se nove discipline hirurgije dečjeg uzrasta: hirurgija novorođenčeta, urologija i grudna hirurgija. Profesionalni tim za operacionom stolom zajedno sa hirurzima činili su anesteziolozi: dr Klara Gašpar Klopka, dr Đerđi Terek Turajlija i dr Olga Grozdanova. Dečja hirurgija 1977. godine integriše se sa pedijatrijskom hospitalnom službom i preseljava u novi objekat Instituta za zdravstvenu zaštitu majke i deteta, prerasta u Kliniku za dečju hirurgiju, proširuje program dijagnostičkih procedura i elektivnih operacija, primaju se mladi lekari na specijalizaciju. Danas, Klinika za dečju hirurgiju u Novom Sadu je tercijerna zdravstvena ustanova u sastavu Instituta za zdravstvenu zaštitu dece i omladine Vovodine i predstavlja visoko specijalizovan regionalni centar. Klinika ima pet operacionih sala i 36 lekara, specijalista i supspecijalista iz hirurgije i anesteziologije. Generacija pionira postavila je visoke profesionalne standarde, propisala kvalitetne radne normative i prenela mladim generacijama veru da se svim srcem posvete odgovornim i dostojanstvenim zadacima dečje hirurgije.

**Ključne reči:** pedijatri; hirurzi; istorija medicine; pedijatrijske bolnice; istorija, 20. vek

City Hospital (**Figure 1**), along with adult patients. The operative program comprised abdominal and trauma surgery patients. The idea to establish a pediatric surgery service first came from Dr. Nestor

Teodorović, head of the Second Surgical Department. His early death prevented him from realizing this idea, but Dr. Vladimir Jakovljević, head of the First and Second Surgical Departments at the City Hospital in Novi Sad embraced and developed the idea. Upon his initiative, in December 1954, a young specialist in general surgery, Dr. Dušan Jovanović was given approval to specialize in pediatric surgery at the University Children's Hospital in Belgrade [1].

In January 1956, Dr. Jovanović returned from Belgrade as a pediatric surgery specialist, and a twenty-bed Pediatric Surgery Unit was opened for the first time in Novi Sad. As the number of children patients was growing, the need for adequate organisational separation of pediatric surgery grew as well. In 1959, the 55-bed ward became the Department of Pediatric Surgery and Orthopedics. Dr. Dušan Jovanović remained its head, and Dr. Miroljub Vidaković began his specialization in pediatric surgery. Over the following years, seven more doctors started a specialist training: Dr. Dušan Pajić in 1962, Dr. Slobodan Petrović in 1963, Dr. Stanislav Štojanović, Dr. Branislava Savić Kozomorić and Dr. Živorad Jocić in 1965, and two years later Dr. Božidar Rašić and Dr. Velimir Stojanović. The young specialists initiated new pediatric surgical disciplines: neonatal surgery, urology and thoracic surgery, with 70 beds [2].

In Novi Sad, the idea of integrating pediatric surgery with pediatric health services came to fruition when the Pediatric Surgery Department became Pediatric Surgery Clinic and moved into a new, purpose built wing of the Institute for Mother and Child Health Care. In 1977, its capacity in-



**Figure 1.** The facade of the building in which the First and the Second Surgical Departments of the City Hospital in Novi Sad were located and where the medical care of children started in the early twentieth century. Two figures of angels on the facade are symbolic protectors of the sick, injured and weak.

*Slika 1.* Fasada zgrade Prvog i Drugog hirurškog odeljenja Gradske bolnice u Novom Sadu gde je početkom dvadesetog veka započelo lečenje malih pacijenata. Fasadu krase dva anđela kao zaštitnici bolesnih, povređenih i nemoćnih.

creased to 86 beds and three operating theatres, four subspecialized departments, an outpatient department, and a 24-hour emergency department for the population of the whole Province of Vojvodina. New equipment had contributed to the improvement of surgical outcomes in neonatal emergencies. Development of pediatric anesthesia and technological support had significantly improved surgical treatment of children. After the establishment of the Intensive Care Unit, critically ill patients were monitored and received better care, which resulted in reduced mortality, particularly decreasing the newborn death rate. The advancement of professional medical knowledge and skills was remarkable with introduction of new surgical techniques and protocols, especially after the doctors returned from advanced training at highly specialized centers of pediatric surgery in London, Paris, Munich, etc. The intensive clinical work of the team of doctors (**Figure 2**) was successful in research and health projects, and the Pediatric Surgery Clinic, with its subspecialty units, was a valuable base for theoretical and clinical knowledge taught at the Novi Sad Faculty of Medicine, founded in 1960 [3].

### The pioneers

**Prof. Dr. Dušan Jovanović** (1922 – 2009) was the founder and the first executive director (1977 – 1986) of the Novi Sad Pediatric Surgery Clinic. He started his medical studies in Szeged, Hungary, and graduated from the University of Belgrade after the end of World War II [4]. As a young physician, in 1953 he completed specialization in general surgery, and then in pediatric surgery (1956). He broadened his professional experience in Paris, at the surgical clinic at *Hôpital des Enfants Malades*, under the mentorship of Prof. Dr. Marcel Fèvre. Dr. Jovanović contributed a lot in recruiting new surgeons, upgrading medical facilities, as well as in developing subspecialty services. He was a professor of surgery at the Novi Sad Faculty of Medicine (1977 – 1986), full-heartedly devoted to the interests and prosperity of the Pediatric Surgery Clinic.

**Prof. Dr. Dušan Pajić** (1931 – 2015) was the pioneer in pediatric orthopedics at the Pediatric Surgery Clinic in Novi Sad. He was head of the Pediatric Orthopedic Department, head of Pediatric Surgery Clinic, director of Institute, and professor of surgery at the Faculty of Medicine. A visionary of great energy, Dr. Pajić focused on the area of pediatric orthopedics which had not been fully investigated, with significant incidence of conditions among children that needed medical treatment. It is the outstanding accomplishment of this orthopedic surgeon that nowadays there are no bow legged children, leg length discrepancy caused by hip dislocation and torticollis or wry neck deformities in the region of Vojvodina, which were quite frequent deformities in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Vojvodina. Dr. Pajić was always a step ahead of his time; he



**Figure 2.** The pioneers of pediatric surgery in Novi Sad (from left to right, above to below): Prof. Dr. Dušan Jovanović, Prof. Dr. Dušan Pajić, Prof. Dr. Slobodan Petrović, Prof. Dr. Stanislav Stojanović, Prim. Dr. Branislava Kozomorić, Prim. Dr. Božidar Rašić, Prim. Dr. Klara Klopka, Prim. Dr. Đerđi Terek Turajlija, and Dr. Olga Grozdanova

**Slika 2.** Pioniri dečje hirurgije u Novom Sadu (sleva nadesno, odgore prema dole): prof. dr Dušan Jovanović, prof. dr Dušan Pajić, prof. dr Slobodan Petrović, prof. dr Stanislav Stojanović, prim. dr Branislava Kozomorić, prim. dr Božidar Rašić, prim. dr Klara Klopka, prim. dr Đerđi Terek Turajlija, dr Olga Grozdanova

insisted on introducing innovative new approaches in diagnostics and treatment of orthopedic conditions in children. He wrote ten books, presenting his great knowledge and experience in surgery. Even in retirement, he was the inspirer of a highly valuable literary contribution to surgery; together with a number of distinguished surgeons, he was the editor and co-author in "Surgery: Selected Chapters", an exceptional book published in 2009.

**Prof. Dr. Slobodan Petrović** (1933 – 2015) was a groundbreaker in surgical treatment of urogenital problems in children and adolescents. As a specialist in both pediatric surgery and urology, he had the honor to learn from the pioneer of pediatric urology, Sir David Innes Williams at the Hospital for Sick Children in London, where Dr. Petrović spent several months in a specialist advanced clinical training. Later, he extended his clinical experiences while on a similar training at the Urologischen und Kinderurologischen Klinik der Universitätsmedizin in Mainz, Germany. After his return to the Novi Sad Pediatric Surgery

Clinic he set out to introduce specific diagnostic methods and to broaden the operative program by performing complex surgeries in the whole urinary tract. Dr. Petrović was the head the Pediatric Urology Department and it grew into a prominent clinical unit and a representative part of the Pediatric Surgery Clinic. Dr. Petrović also taught surgery at the Faculty of Medicine (1989 – 1998), and in his later career he was a Clinic executive director (1994 – 1998).

**Prof. Dr. Stanislav Stojanović** (1935 – 2008) was the first head (1977 – 2000) of the Pediatric Abdominal Surgery Ward. As a specialist in both general surgery and pediatric surgery, he never hesitated to perform even the most challenging elective and urgent abdominal surgeries. He was engaged as a supervisor to many postgraduates in the MSM and PhD programs in surgery at the Novi Sad Faculty of Medicine. During the time when he was the vice-dean, due to his good managerial skills, Dr. Stojanović established a relationship between medicine and management to the benefit of the Pediatric Surgery Clinic increasing its prominence in many respects. Dr. Stojanović's contribution to the pediatric surgery was acknowledged and he was awarded the Novi Sad October Prize in 1988.

**Prim. Dr. Branislava Kozomorić** was the first head (1977 – 1993) of the Neonatal and Infant Surgery Ward. As a restless enthusiast, from the very beginning she was a groundbreaker in a very difficult field – diagnostics and operative treatment of congenital anomalies and diseases of the newborn and infants, and further broadened her surgical knowledge and skills during her four-month advanced training at the Children's Hospital in Munich (Kinderchirurgische Klinik und Poliklinik im Dr. von Haunerschen Kinderspital). Dr. Kozomorić had all the qualities of a highly experienced clinician genuinely devoted to her patients, and until the last day of her 40-year career, she performed surgeries and was engaged in the 24-hour surgical service. She is well remembered for her exceptional dedication by many of her trainees.

**Prim. Dr. Božidar Rašić** joined the physician team in 1967, as a young MD of encyclopedic knowledge and love for surgical literature. Dr. Rašić was an abdominal surgeon, at disposal for both planned and urgent surgical procedures. His special qualities as a primarius were patience, kind attitude, and a high level of professional competence.

The professional team consisted of surgeons and anesthesiologists.

**Prim. Dr. Klara Gašpar Klopka** was the founder and a distinguished head of the Department of Pediatric Anesthesiology and Resuscitation. She was a hardworking, responsible anesthesiologist, always willing to share her knowledge and experience with her co-workers and young physicians.

**Prim. Dr. Đerđi Terek Turajlija** was an experienced anesthesiologist, predominantly working with the newborns. She was an exceptional anesthesiologist, and after the operating theatre, greatly contributed to the post-operative pain management in the youngest patients.

**Dr. Olga Grozdanova (1941 – 2008)** was a role model of a reliable anesthesiologist who was always willing to be part of the operating team, for both planned and urgent surgeries.

At present, the Pediatric Surgery Clinic in Novi Sad is a tertiary health care institution located at the Institute for Child and Youth Health Care of Vojvodina as a specialized regional center. It has five operating theatres, 36 doctors, specialists and subspecialists in surgery and anesthesiology. The classical delivery of surgical services has been innovated, and the specialized health care services are now provided

for children and young people aged 0 – 18 years. The years during which the Clinic was being established and the accomplishments of its leading specialists represented a sound foundation for the future of pediatric surgery in Novi Sad. Pictures on the wall of the Clinic's amphitheatre are the reminders of the pioneer generation who had established high professional standards, core values, and a deep belief in the dignity of hard work and true commitment.

This paper is dedicated to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pediatric Surgery in Novi Sad.

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