

THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE POST-COVID ERA - THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PREVENTIVE CENTER OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

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DOI: 10.5937/BatutPHCO24168R

Background: Promotion of health and healthy lifestyles is a complex process leading the individual and the community to have better control over the determinants of health and improve the relationship between people and their environment. A large number of patients gravitate to primary health care centers every day. It is the first experience that can be decisive in the user's relationship with healthcare professionals and in relationship with his own health. The pandemic has exposed the main weaknesses of health responses in the world, reflecting also on the prevention of non-infectious diseases. The Covid pandemic has transformed people's lives, but it has also given a twist when it comes to the organization of health care systems in order to strengthen preventive work.

Methods and Objectives: In this study, we analyzed the method of health promotion and the response of patients to screening programs within the Prevention Center of the Pancevo Health Center. The results covered the period from 2018 to 2023.

Results: In the period before the Covid-19 pandemic, the health education work in the group was significantly higher compared to the individual approach ($p < 0.05$). The response of patients for the screening of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases was significantly higher compared to the screening for depression ($p < 0.01$). In the post-covid period, individual health education work increased significantly ($p < 0.01$). Comparing the pre-Covid and post-Covid period, screening for diabetes increased by 5%, screening for cardiovascular risk increased by 10%, while screening for early detection of depression increased by 35%.

Conclusions: Primary health care is the carrier of preventive activities. In order to achieve satisfactory results in disease prevention after the Covid-19 pandemic, primary health care systems should develop plans that will achieve better results for the population in the long term. The pandemic was the trigger for the development of new technologies. By monitoring the response of the population to screening programs, it is necessary to increase the activities of individual and/or group work on health promotion, cooperation of health institutions, practical implications, acceleration of technology adoption in public health practice.

Keywords: prevention, screening, health promotion, Covid-19, primary health care