



90th anniversary of the publication of the Slovenian Medical Journal: Historical overview from 1929 to 2021

Ob 90. letniku izhajanja Zdravniškega vestnika:
Zgodovinski pregled od leta 1929 do leta 2021

Marta Cvijić,^{1,2} Irena Perne,^{3,4} Ksenija Geršak,^{2,5} Petja Fister^{2,6}

Abstract

Slovenian Medicine Journal has made important steps in the development of Slovenian modern medicine and modern Slovenian medical terminology. The aim of the article was to present a short review of the development of Slovenian Medical Journal from its beginning till today.

Izvleček

Zdravniški vestnik je odigral pomembno vlogo v razvoju sodobne slovenske medicine in slovenskega medicinskega jezika, zlasti terminologije. Namen članka je na kratko prikazati razvoj Zdravniškega vestnika od njegove ustanovitve 1929 do danes.

Since its founding in 1929, the Slovenian Medical Journal has been the central professional journal of the Slovenian Medical Association. The original idea to create a Slovenian medical journal was formed around 20 years earlier, when in 1906, the then young surgeon Dr.

Franc Derganc ([Figure 1](#)) from Vienna wrote a letter to Prim. Ed Šlajmer in Ljubljana: "I started thinking about whether it would be good and possible to establish a Slovenian medical journal (initially three to four times a year) that would be published and edited by you, and

¹ Department of Cardiology, Division of Internal Medicine, University Medical Centre Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

² Faculty of Medicine, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

³ Slovenian Medical Journal, Ljubljana, Slovenia

⁴ Association of Societies - Slovenian Medical Association, Ljubljana, Slovenia

⁵ Division of Gynaecology and Obstetrics, University Medical Centre Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

⁶ Department of Paediatric Surgery and Intensive Therapy, Division of Paediatrics, University Medical Centre Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Correspondence / Korespondenca: Marta Cvijić, e: marta.cvijic@gmail.com

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Figure 1: The first editor of the Medical Journal: Dr. Franc Derganc (source: the Medical Journal archive).

I would help you as a secretary? We (you, Plečnik and I) might immediately start compiling medical terminology that would be influential to the later terminology of the Yugoslavs.” (1)

Two years later, Dr. Derganc became Secretary of the

Society of Physicians in Carniola. He wrote to the Association of Physicians of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia in Zagreb that Slovenian doctors wish to participate with their articles and expert discussions in the *Liječnički vestnik* (*Medical Journal*), which was at the time the professional journal of the Society of Physicians, and had been published for 30 years. Croatian doctors warmly welcomed and accepted the initiative. The May issue of the 1912 edition, the 34th year of the *Liječnički vestnik*, was thus printed entirely in Slovene and dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Society of Physicians in Carniola (2). It was edited by three Slovenian doctors: Janez Bleiweis Trsteniški, Franc Derganc and Levičnik. This is one of the first major collections of medical discussions in Slovenian.

On 19 May 1928, at its plenary session, the Committee of the Medical Chamber for Slovenia decided to grant the request of the Slovenian Medical Association in Ljubljana and published the *Medical Journal* as a scientific supplement to its newsletter (1). Thus, on 24 January 1929, the first issue was published (Figure 2), edited by Dr. Franc Derganc Snr., who also set clear goals: to establish a complete Slovenian medical faculty, create standardised medical terminology, strengthen Slovenian medical organizations, acquaint Slovenian doctors with the achievements of modern medicine, publish articles on curative and social medicine, history of domestic healthcare, biographies and memoirs of local doctors, and remnants of folk medicine (3). The first editor Franc Derganc Snr., was followed by editors Alja Košir (1930–31), Robert Neubauer (1932–38) and Slavko Prevec (1939–40) (4).

In 1941, after the 3rd published issue, they stopped



Figure 2: Covers of the journal through time: the first issue of the Medical Journal from 1929, the cover of Partisan Journal from 1944, the cover of the Medical Journal from 1962 and the cover of the Medical Journal from 2002 (source: the Medical Journal archive).



Figure 3: Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Medical Journal publication (source: the Medical Journal archive).

publishing and joined the general cultural silence. The transitional period until the liberation was bridged by the *Partizanski zdravstveni vestnik* (the *Partisan Health Journal*) (1944–45) (Figure 2). The newsletter dealt with the practical problems of war medicine, whilst simultaneously forming and preparing the construction of the post-war medical doctrine and medical service. The 14th issue of *Partizanski zdravstveni vestnik* (*Partisan Health Journal*) joined the pre-war *Zdravniški vestnik* (*Medical Journal*) with the post-war *Zdravstveni vestnik* (*Health Journal*), and the editors were Mirko Čerňič and Bogomir Magajna.

In 1946, the Medical Chamber was abolished. *Zdravniški vestnik* (the *Medical Journal*) was renamed to *Zdravstveni vestnik* (the *Health Journal*) (Figure 2). Healthcare gained the characteristics of bureaucratic medicine. The association stood up for the rights of doctors, better regulation of working conditions and proper evaluation of their work. All this was discussed by the *Health Journal*, firmly connecting the medical profession.

The editors-in-chief were: Alojz Kraigher (1946–1947), followed by Mirko Karlin in 1948, Mirko Karlin and Franjo Smerdu in 1949, Franjo Smerdu in 1950, Bogdan Brecelj and Franjo Smerdu in 1950 and 1951, Ivan Marinčič and Stanislav Mahkota from 1953 to 1966, Ivan Marinčič, Stanislav Mahkota and Miroslav Kališnik in 1967, and Stanislav Mahkota and Miroslav Kališnik from 1968 to 1976 (4). The latter was the editor-in-chief until 1988, when he was succeeded by Jože Drinovec, who held this post for 20 years. Under the auspices of Drinovec, the journal was renamed to *Zdravniški vestnik* (*Medical Journal*) in 1992 (Figure 2). Saša Markovič was

the editor-in-chief between 2009 and 2015, and Ksenija Geršak has been the editor-in-chief since 2015.

In 1929, the *Medical Journal* was published in the 24 x 17 cm format, which it maintained until 1941 (1). Individual issues of the *Partisan Health Journal* were of various sizes. In the years 1946 to 1948, the *Health Journal* returned to its original format, temporarily being increased to the 33.5 x 24 cm format in 1949, and then remained at 28 x 20 cm until 1992. Since 1992, it was published monthly in the same format as the previous bulletin, with the title of the *Medical Journal*. There were 12 issues in almost every year, until 2016, when the *Medical Journal* began to be published every 2 months. In addition to the printed edition, the newsletter has also been published online since 2001. Since 1968, in addition to regular numbers, supplements have also been published occasionally.

From the very beginning, the *Medical Journal* included publications by clinical, practical and faculty physicians of the then incomplete Faculty of Medicine (5). After the end of the Second World War, with the establishment of a complete Faculty of Medicine, the number of publications in the journal increased greatly, as employees of the Faculty of Medicine, teachers and assistants from preclinical and clinical institutes saw the then *Medical Journal* as their own journal.

In 1979, at a solemn meeting, the editorial board at the time celebrated the 50th anniversary of the publication of the *Medical Journal* (Figure 3).

The *Medical Journal* was published in Ljubljana, except between 1932 and 1938, when it was published in Golnik and several issues were published even during the Second World War. In 1933, the then editor Robert Neubauer expanded the *Medical Journal* program. He founded the *Library of the Health Journal*, within which one volume was published: *The problem of stigmatization (labelling) in the light of medicine*, by Ivan Matko Snr. The Library of the *Medical Journal* was revived with numerous publications between 1974 and 1985. At the initiative of Robert Neubauer, *Evgenika* was being published as a supplement to the *Medical Journal* from 1935 to 1938, edited by Božo Škerlj.

The *Medical Journal* was and will remain a Slovenian professional journal. This is its advantage, but also a problem. Given the size of our country, it is difficult to obtain a large enough number of quality articles, and it is even more difficult to achieve sufficient number of citations of articles. In the desire for international recognition, the *Medical Journal* complemented its editorial policy at the beginning of the 21st century by enabling the publication of articles in two languages, Slovene

and English. At the same time, the content and editorial board of the magazine was renewed. The introduction of the *Technologies in Medicine* section paved the way for interdisciplinary cooperation and closer links with experts in other fields that contribute to the development of medicine (6). With the expansion of the editorial board and the inclusion of renowned international experts, the *Medical Journal* now followed the example of foreign journals.

The *Medical Journal* is the official journal of the Slovenian Medical Association and the Slovenian Academy of Medicine. On 1 January 2008, it was included in the International Science base the *Science Citation Index Expanded* and the *Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition* (7). In 2010, the *Medical Journal* acquired the impact factor, which it maintained until 2012 (8,9). In 2017, the *Medical Journal* joined the largest and most recognizable directory of open access journals in the world (DOAJ), and shortly afterwards acquired the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number, which serves as an identifier for articles in the online environment. The *Medical Journal* has successfully joined indexing in international medical browsers such as Scopus and Embase.

In the pre-digital age, the *Medical Journal* carried out an important mission by encouraging the publication of research work and thus supporting educational work in medicine at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, while playing a historical role in developing contemporary Slovenian medical terminology (1,5). The *Medical*

Journal has been fulfilling its mission through various periods and today it is making special efforts to preserve the Slovenian medical word. The *Medical Journal* therefore educates, informs, raises awareness, and addresses issues for Slovenian doctors in many other ways.

Its editorial board strives to publish original and transparent scientific and professional articles, innovations in medicine and play the part of a professional liaison. The editors are also particularly interested in the idea that the *Medical Journal* remains an indispensable companion not only for every Slovenian doctor, but also becomes more broadly appealing, and that all those who participate and contribute to the progress of medicine would read it and publish in its pages. That is why we invite you all to join us in enriching and improving our *Medical Journal* together.

This text is part of a video presentation on the history of the Medical Journal, which we prepared for the solemn event on the occasion of the 160th anniversary of the Slovenian Medical Association and the 90th anniversary of the Medical Journal.

Conflict of interest

None declared.

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