

## EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

It is not so long ago that we entered the new year and it is not so long ago since the 21<sup>st</sup> century has begun. Perhaps it would be worth thinking of what the previous century was like and what it meant for children (as this edition is dedicated to the pediatric issue).

Without any exaggeration we can say that the twentieth century was “the century of the child”. Of course it is not true completely – it was the century of the child especially in its second part, after World War II and perhaps only in our Euro-Atlantic area. If we look closely at what this time meant for health and child care and what it brought in our country, it will be a truly spectacular sight – the complete eradication of poliomyelitis. We held primacy worldwide – and thanks to the vaccination system, which was introduced at the turn of the 50’s and 60’s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at that time killing infectious bacterial diseases (diphtheria, whooping cough) disappeared or significantly weakened, followed by viral diseases, such as varicella, morbilli (and globally smallpox) etc. Further, it certainly was a system of preventive health check-ups in the way it has been in our country for several decades. This is another excellent example of a prophylactic approach to a developing organism. Social paediatrics has played its crucial role, too. Let me remind a CAN syndrome, including physical, mental and sexual abuse and neglect of the child on the one hand – and the historical situation of the status of children in our country on the other, when throughout centuries, children were first registered at the age of their confirmation, i.e. in the time of puberty, and many other examples.

What lessons can we learn for the next century? We feel that this “refinement” of the society’s view of the child and their needs could and should continue – why, for example, not to perceive the prenatal stage of human development in this perspective? Why not to call (and certainly feel) this period as the period of “a prenatal child”? One has to abandon the attitude which is very well characterized by the sentence “I want to get rid of it”...! Here it is obvious that the medicine and health care come as “second”. What comes first is the society’s attitude to various things and situations, and all of a sudden barriers stand in the way against which health care seems to be inadequate.

For several decades, the tops of mortality and morbidity rates in adults have been dominated by so-called civilization diseases, namely cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes mellitus type 2, musculoskeletal diseases, increasing incidence of psychiatric diagnoses, particularly depression and others. This spectrum of diseases that English aptly refers to as “life-style diseases”. – i.e. diseases that are not absolutely necessary but which are caused by our inappropriate lifestyles. Until recently this group of diseases has been the domain of adult age. However, the situation is evolving, and these diseases are also gradually being dealt with in Pediatrics. They are mainly obesity and overweight in children and adolescents, which are the “entry ticket” to the train safely directed to a number of these diagnostic stations in adulthood. It is no longer an inability to diagnose a disorder or a disease, as it was in time e.g. before the discovery of X-rays, at times of inaccessible laboratory tests. It is not either about a lack of medicine or unavailability of care. It is about our behavior, the society’s behaviour, it is a matter of (not) feeling responsible for our health and for the health of our children – this is a problem not only for present days but also for future years. It is quite clear that most of these diseases are preventable – and preventable in the way of life, that is what children learn in their homes and families and what habits they carry with themselves into their adult life. The future of a healthy population in the coming years is not based on skills and possibilities of health care, as it is in the hands of all of us. Is it an optimistic vision? Judge for yourself ...

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