



Enterostomal therapy in Croatia – Our way and vision 2010-2017

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It has been a great pleasure for us Croatian nurses to say we have first officially trained enterostomal therapists (ET), according to WCET (World Council of Enterostomal Therapists) program. We would like to share our journey with other colleagues. First initiative in this area of enterostomal therapy in Republic Croatia started from the clinic I work at. It is my wish to share our experience within neighbouring countries. My aim is to encourage them in their way by showing our model. No goal is impossible if there is passion, love and persistence. In the beginning of 2010 I started working as a head nurse in department of surgery UHC „Sestre Milosrdnice“. This particular clinic encompasses a large part of abdominal and oncology etiology. Various types of problems with complicated wounds were not rare. The rest of nursing staff, burdened with other activities and duties did't have time to devote to those particular issues at least not the way it should be. Club of the people with ostomy encounter the same problems. Further enthusiasm, strength and persistence gave me my personal experience with malignant disease. It made me see the situations on a more personal level but also with necessary professional distance. Further knowledge in this field of healthcare and organised care in the nursing department would be of tremendous help in faster and better reconvalescence in every segment of life. I founded a society of nurses consisting of all head nurses from departments with such problems and such patients. I made contacts with all our resources from industries that supply tools for caring for wounds and stomas. Those people and their contacts in neighbouring countries are actively helping create quality professional net and encourage further cooperation with ET nurses in the region. This cooperation resulted in quality professional and personal work with slovenian ET nurses. In my clinic I organised all expert events in ECET(European Council of Enterostomal Therapy) and WCET organisation. This kind of education brought great results. Nurses get first hand information from hands on experienced nurse and apply it in their home countries. Surgical clinic begins to apply one of key segments in process of stoma patient therapy-preoperative marking of stoma placement on the skin. Those were pioneer steps. Model I personally applied in Croatia is taken by

other smaller hospitals as guidelines of better quality care for a patient. It is our vision that we want to have educated ET in Croatia and apply it in current health care system. Our year long cooperation with Slovenia resulted in including three nurses from Croatia besides me. I must give credit to great organisation expert lecturers, mentors and other participants. We encounter this education within UKC Ljubljana, Slovenia. We would like to thank all our colleagues from section Slovenia ET on accepting us into their program of education.

Also immediately after graduation in UHC Ljubljana I become a member of ECET. In 2017, Croatia is presenting for the first time in a major international conference. That was exactly the ECET conference in Berlin, where I talk about how important is the cooperation, and the exchange of knowledge. Great opportunity for new contacts, new knowledge, new skills. How many opportunities and professional challenges in one place!

Today Croatia has three ET, and we are ready to expand the level of care for our patients on a completely new level. Every beginning is difficult and its not easy to be a pioneer in any segment of work or life. Any change, however good it is, encounters resistance and lack of trust. On a human level its easy to understand that but producing a larger number of educated ET on job market in Croatia we make it possible to implement them in much needed segment of healthcare. This way we enable various socio-economic factors for the community as a whole 2017. ET nurses have been recognised and implemented in regular health care system of Republic Croatia. We are creating first algorithms and work standards in the area of ET therapy in accordance to real challenges of everyday work. We are building better and more efficient connection of hospital and outpatient care. Every organised and controlled way of activity always brings better results and minimizes bad factors. I am sure we are just at the beginning of one long and interesting professional way but im also sure this way is correct and efficient for all participants in the process of supplying proper healthcare to our patients. ET nurse is a key link between all professions related to this field.

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