

20th Annual International Conference “DISASTER MEDICINE”

Over the days of June 13th to 15th, 2017, the jubilee 20th annual international conference entitled “DISASTER MEDICINE” was held in Luhačovice, Czech Republic, under the patronage of the Governor of the Zlín Region, Mr. Jiří Čunek. Also assuming patronage over the conference were the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, the WHO office in the CR and the WHO office in the SR.



This international conference “DISASTER MEDICINE” has gained major international attention and recognition over its 20 years thanks to its unique concept, a fact proven by its exceptional level of international participation (over 40 % of attendees were from abroad). Attending the conference in Luhačovice were representatives from Armenia, Brazil, China, Croatia, France, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, Russia, Slovakia and Uzbekistan.

The main topic of the conference reacted to current problems stemming from the international situation, including the ever-growing threat of terrorism and consequent reaction

to the consequences of terrorist attacks, including those on so-called “soft targets”.

When confronting the consequences of a terrorist attack during pre-hospital care, the keys are synergy of all intervening components, establishment of “type activities” and the quality and speed of intervention during mass-casualty events when minutes are truly decisive in terms of health and saving lives. The fact that great attention is focusing on this topic in the Czech Republic is seen in the participation of high-level representatives of other ministries outside of medicine. The ceremonial opening of the conference was led by speakers: Governor of the Zlín Region and Senator Jiří Čunek, Deputy Defence Minister Dipl. Ing. Tomáš Kuchta, Deputy Health Minister prof. MUDr. Roman Prymula, CSc., Ph.D., Director of the Military Medical Agency of the ACR General MUDr. Zoltán Bubeník, President of the Defence and Security Industry Association of the Czech Republic RNDr. Jiří Hynek, Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Marek Svoboda, Director at the Ministry of Industry and Trade Ing. Jaroslava Špalková, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Logistics and Crisis Management of Tomas Bata University in Zlín Mgr. Marek Tomašík, Ph.D and others.

The actual professional content of the conference “20 Years of Emergency Preparedness in Medicine” with the subtitle “Disaster Medicine - Preparedness for CBRN Threats” was divided into four expert blocks:





1st BLOCK

20 Years of Emergency Preparedness in Medicine

This involved 11 presentations that assessed the 20-year period of holding the conference and 20 years of emergency preparedness of, inter alia, the healthcare systems of the CR and SR including public health protection. Also new challenges were addressed and highlighted - biological risks, migration, terrorism, the CR national security audit, and consideration was given also to further advancement in emergency preparedness in medicine. This initial block featured 6 presentations from representatives of the Czech Republic and 5 presentations from those of the Slovak Republic.

2nd BLOCK

Disaster Medicine - Preparedness for CBRN Threats

This block contained a total of 13 lectures, where one presentation each was rendered by representatives of Slovakia, Russia and Brazil. These primarily focused on principles of emergency medical support during major sports and social events (WC in football, the Olympics, etc.).

3rd BLOCK

Practical Demonstrations

This block featured practical preparedness demonstrations of intervention by IRS components, simulating a situation where a large number of persons were affected by a chemical pollutant (EMS Liberec, FRS Zlín), as well as simulated resolution of an outbreak of highly hazardous infections and consequent transport to a medical facility (EMS Hradec Králové, FRS Zlín). The block also included two workshops (use of PPE, monitoring).

4th BLOCK

Various

This was comprised of 16 lectures dealing with preparation and preparedness of individual health service providers from various points of view (EMS, MOC EMS, hospitals, benefits of exercises and drills, a metric for assessing the achieved degree of preparedness, etc.). A very interesting and beneficial presentation was given by Mr. Takashi Hosada, Ph.D., focusing on the nuclear tragedy in Fukushima, Japan, and measures taken in its consequence.

CONCLUSIONS

The assessment by foreign participants at the final meeting after the conference was very positive. They praised the participation of all the components engaged in emergency preparedness and the sophistication of the IRS in the CR including links to medical facilities. Their countries lack similar conferences in such composition and focus. They also praised the refinement of the lectures and requested the possibility to obtain a translation and use the lectures in their own countries. They see the uniqueness of the conference in the common platform of presentation of individual components reacting to the consequences of high-casualty events.

The conference discussions and the content of individual presentations indicate consistency of the issue when resolving consequences of security risks on the part of national healthcare systems in close cooperation with further concerned ministries.

A key requirement is the permanent professional ministry-level coordination of preparations of healthcare in general and individual types of healthcare service providers in order to achieve the required state of preparedness and ensure coherence of individual elements of the healthcare system, which represent emergency and critical infrastructure of healthcare.

Functionality and the agility of emergency management of individual providers of (not just) healthcare services and workplaces of health administrative units greatly determine the level of health safety of a country's citizens. The conference underscored the need for permanent coordination of preparations in the context of dynamics of legislative changes, but also of the dynamics of the transformation of the security environment by the emergence of "new security threats" across Europe, and the growth in responsibility of health care systems for rendering healthcare services and protection of public health in accordance with medical findings in 21st-century medicine. This also applies in the context of rights of victims of emergencies and crisis situations.

Another aim of the conference was to invite the academic sphere represented by FLCM UTB to co-organize the 20th Annual Conference alongside the company EGO Zlín, spol. s.r.o., where a group of enthusiasts and experts of individual fields could meet with the common goal of strengthening emergency preparedness in healthcare. Academia was invited to introduce new findings into textbooks and training materials of universities as soon and as well as possible.

The recommended conference outputs elaborated by the scientific and organizational committee will be forwarded to the responsible parliamentary and senate committees, the National Security Council, responsible and cooperating ministries and emergency managers in administrative units for use in the framework of their powers.

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