



## Vojnosanitetski pregled – 80th anniversary

### Vojnosanitetski pregled – 80. godišnjica

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#### Introduction

*Vojnosanitetski pregled* (Military Medical Review), a journal of physicians, dentists, and pharmacists of the Serbian Army, one of Serbia's oldest scientific journals, was born in September 1944. The Second World War was raging when the first issue of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was published (Figure 1). It was printed in Bari, Italy, and soon after, the second issue was released in liberated Belgrade, Serbia. *Vojnosanitetski pregled* continued the tradition of, at the time, a very respected pre-war journal – *Vojnosanitetski glasnik* (Military Medical Herald) (Figure 2) published from 1930–1941 as an expert newsletter of the Medical

Department of the Ministry of Army and Navy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, with its concept, appearance, and content<sup>1,2</sup>.

Reflecting the spirit of the time when it began to be released, *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was focused on the issues of the military medical service during the war and on current problems of war medicine. At the time, the main goal of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was to increase the physicians' level of knowledge in the fields of war surgery, war epidemiology, and war military medical service. Hence, the published papers predominantly covered these topics. In these articles, initial information regarding sulfamidime, penicillin, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane-powder, etc. was provided.

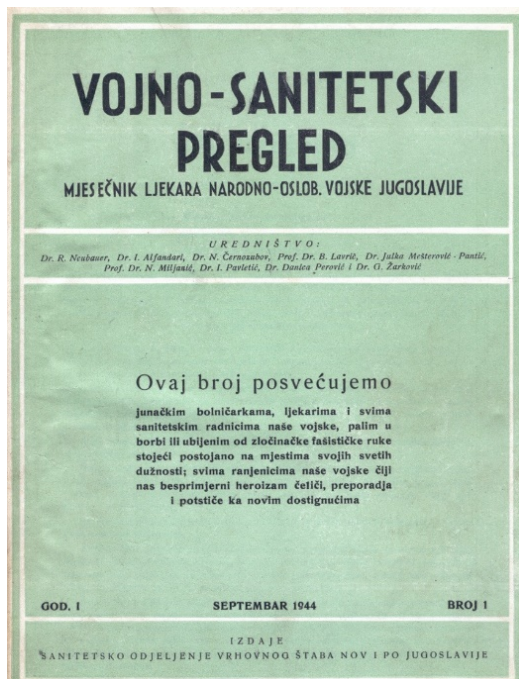


Fig. 1 – Cover page of the first issue of the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* (September 1944).

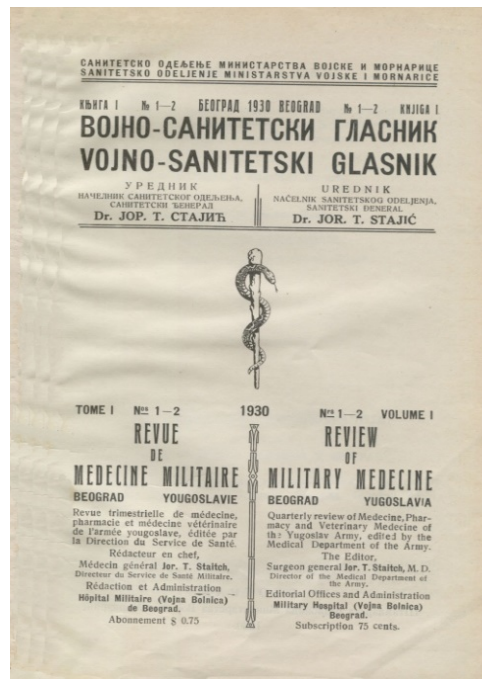


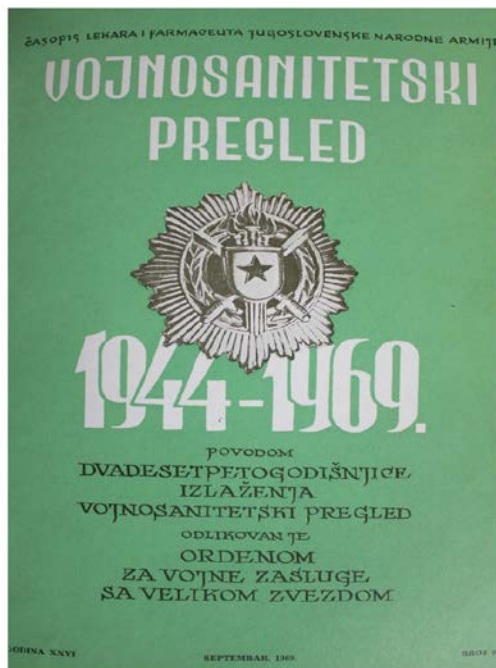
Fig. 2 – Cover page of the first issue of the *Vojnosanitetski glasnik* (1930).

Although *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* was focused from the start on the issues of military services, the Editorial Board was trying to contribute to solving the deficiencies of the health system both in the military service and outside of it. *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* was striving to inform physicians and pharmacists of all significant accomplishments, scientific achievements, and expert work in various fields of medicine and pharmacy. The journal has always been open to reviewing all important innovations in medicine. Many significant successes in the development of medical science in our region have been published on the pages of our journal. New diagnostic and treatment methods were quite often described for the first time in our journal. Therefore, in those years, *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* was considered “the herald and the oldest propagator of the new era of medicine in our country”. In the first 40 years of its existence, *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* had published 3,640 scientific articles written by 3,000 authors. Furthermore, over 1,300 reviews of significant results written by international authors in the field of biomedicine were published. The journal already gained a reputation not only with domestic but also with international readers. This is evidenced by the fact that our journal was exchanged with 90 medical journals from 28 countries, and printed in 2,500 copies with a growing tendency. This was the way for *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* to become the bearer of our scientific thought into the world, which it has<sup>3-5</sup>. In the 1950s and early 1960s, *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* was covered by several well-known bibliographic abstract and citation journals and, later, their electronic databases, such as *Index Medicus* (MEDLINE) (1950–2017), *Excerpta Medica* (EMBASE), *Biological Abstracts*, *International Pharmaceutical Abstracts*, and *Chemical Abstracts*. Since 2002, *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* has been included in the EBSCO base, which provides a free

online approach to the journal contents and downloads the articles in full form to its subscribers. On the occasion of its 25th publishing anniversary (1969), *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* was awarded the Grand Star by the Order of Military Merit, which was a huge recognition for the Editorial Board, the authors, and everyone who contributed to this accolade (Figure 3)<sup>1,2</sup>.

From the first issue until today, *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* has managed to maintain the continuity of publishing and overcome the occasional downfalls that were inevitable in the historical circumstances our region has faced in the last eight decades. The dynamic of publishing was changing, depending on the number of submitted manuscripts. In the first ten years, *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* was occasionally published monthly or bimonthly. From 1954 until 1972, it was regularly published monthly, which implies a large number of submitted manuscripts<sup>5</sup>. From 1973 until 2005, six issues were published *per year*. The difficult period that our country underwent during the 1990s reflected on the journal as well. In the mid-1990s, the number of submitted articles was sixtyish<sup>6</sup>. After that period, the slow recovery and reformation of the journal commenced. In the early 2000s, articles selected by the reviewers as especially significant started to be published both in Serbian and English to be more “visible”. This practice influenced a greater influx of articles, and in 2005, for the first time after 30 years, 12 issues of *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* were published<sup>1,2</sup>. Since 2005 until present, the journal has been published every month. Currently, *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* is the only biomedical journal in Serbia that maintains this publishing dynamic.

From its foundation until today, the journal has been edited by 14 Editors-in-Chief (Table 1). All of them, each in their own way, often limited by circumstances in which they



**Fig. 3 – Cover page of the jubilee issue of the *Vojnosanitetski pregleđ* in 1969 dedicated to its 25th Anniversary.**

**Table 1****Editors-in-Chief of the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* from the foundation to present**

1944–1952	Major General Dr. Gojko Nikoliš
1953–1954	Major General Dr. Đura Mešterović
1955–1960	Lieutenant General Dr. Gojko Nikoliš
1960–1962	Colonel Dr. Ivo Pavletić, surgeon
1963–1971	Major General Dr. Žarko Cvetković, surgeon
1971–1979	Colonel Dr. Božidar Nikolić, epidemiologist
1979–1990	Colonel Dr. Vladimir Đergović, surgeon
1990–1995	Colonel Dr. Čedomir Marković
1995–2000	Colonel Dr. Dušan Milić, anesthesiologist
2000–2005	Colonel Prof. Dr. Vladimir Tadić, pharmacologist-toxicologist
2005–2006	Colonel Assist. Prof. Dr. Mile Ignjatović, surgeon
2006–2020	Prof. Dr. Silva Dobrić, clinical pharmacist
2021–2022	Colonel Prof. Dr. Tihomir Ilić, neurologist
2022–	Prof. Dr. Dragana Vučević, immunologist

performed this responsible function, contributed to the development and improvement of the journal. The first Editor-in-Chief of *Vojnosanitetski pregled*, Lieutenant General Dr. Gojko Nikoliš (Editor from 1944–1952 and 1955–1960) (Figure 4), a member of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art, recognized the need for constant professional specialization of the military medical members. His contemporaries described the “astonishing fervor” he pleaded to initiate one scientific and professional military medical journal<sup>3</sup>. Another Editorial Board member who left an indelible mark on the development of the journal during his 25-year-long membership (1964–1990) was Colonel Professor Dr. Dragoljub Pantelić (Figure 5). According to his contemporaries, Dr. Pantelić, a man of high literacy and in-depth knowledge of the scientific method, was *de facto* Chief Editor. He invested his comprehensive efforts into the

scientific literacy of the authors whose articles were published in the journal<sup>6</sup>.

Major changes in the journal’s development were initiated when Colonel Professor Dr. Vladimir Tadić (Figure 6) became the Editor-in-Chief. He was the *spiritus movens* of these changes. The domestic Editorial Board was expanded by joining renowned names of Serbian medicine. The number of peer-reviewers from different fields of medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry who reviewed submitted manuscripts increased (more than 100). Experts outside of military medical institutions are also included in the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* circle of reviewers<sup>7</sup>. Reviews of submitted manuscripts were at least double anonymous peer-reviews<sup>2,7</sup>. All these changes resulted in improved quality of published articles. For the first time after the first issue in 1944, when among editors two women had been included,



**Fig. 4 – Major General Dr. Gojko Nikoliš, founder and the first Editor-in-Chief of the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* (1944–1952 and 1955–1960).**



**Fig. 5 – Colonel Prof. Dr. Dragoljub Pantelić, member of the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* Editorial Board (1964–1990).**





**Fig. 6 – Colonel Prof. Dr. Vladimir Tadić, Editor-in-Chief of the *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* (2000–2005).**



**Fig. 7 – Colonel Assistant Prof. Dr. Mile Ignjatović, Editor-in-Chief of the *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* (2005–2006).**

the Editorial Board was proud to include five women. The current Editorial Board consists of 13 women, including the Editor-in-Chief. Colonel Assistant Professor Dr. Mile Ignjatović (Figure 7) who came as an Editor-in-Chief to *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* in 2005 is creditable for the second stage of reforms initiated in 2002. In the same year (2002), the process of establishing the International Editorial Board was completed, which created the formal conditions for “joining the society” of the international journal family <sup>1</sup>. The journal was enriched with new types of articles, e.g., Letters to the Editor, Comments, Critical Views, etc. During this period, the journal got a new logo and a modern look. This is the very first time the logo (Figure 8) was introduced into *Vojnosanitetski pregljed*. The logo is a combination of a medical symbol (a snake curled around a stick) and a literacy symbol (a pen), including the significant years 1930 and 1944 (the launching years of *Vojnosanitetski glasnik* and *Vojnosanitetski pregljed*, respectively) <sup>8, 9</sup>. The selection criteria for article acceptance have been tightened. The pre-review procedure was established during which authors were

advised how to technically, professionally, and in English language improve the manuscript before it was officially sent to reviewers. Special focus was put on preventing plagiarism and self-plagiarism by implementing measures for their detection and sanctioning. Changes in the editorial policy of *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* made in 2002 and 2005 contributed to increased quality of published papers and their better international visibility. There was an increase in the influx of manuscripts by authors from abroad and an increase in the number of articles published in English (e.g., in 2007 every fifth, and every fourth article in 2008) <sup>2</sup>.

In 2006, Professor Dr. Silva Dobrić (Figure 9) was appointed as Editor-in-Chief and remained in this position until 2020. During this time, several key moments related to the journal occurred. Professor Dobrić continued with the changes her predecessors started in order to improve the quality of the journal. The first fruits of the mentioned changes were harvested in 2008 when *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* was accepted into the *Science Citation Index Expanded* (SCIE), a famous base of scientific journals of the



**Fig. 8 – A new logo of the *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* (2006).**



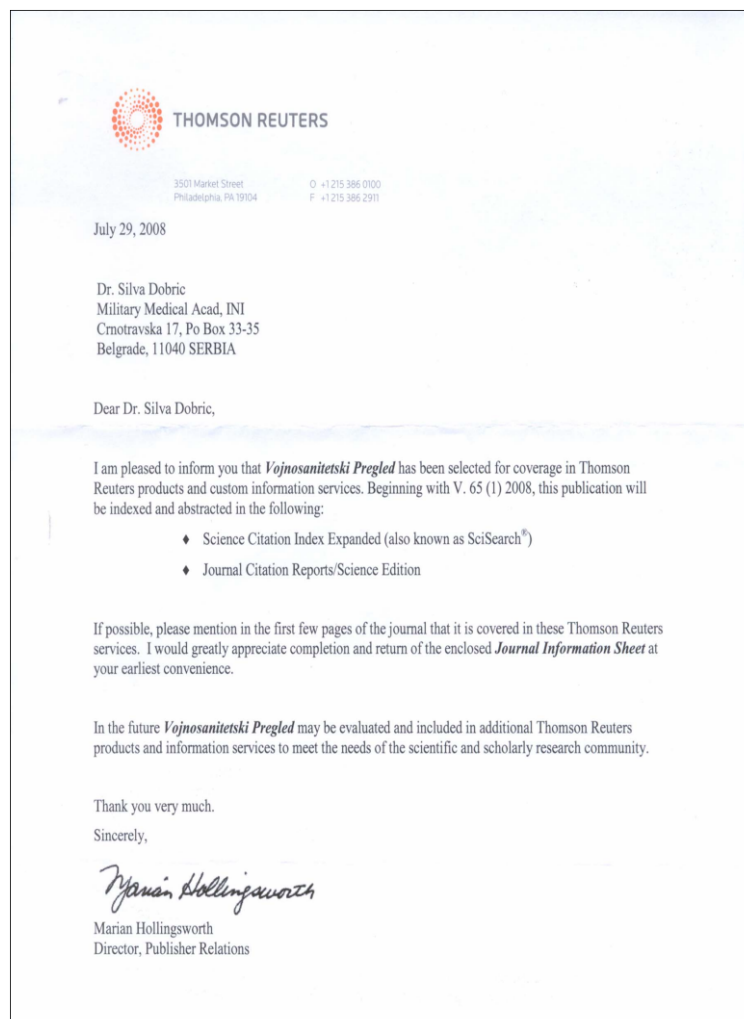
**Fig. 9 – Prof. Dr. Silva Dobrić, Editor-in-Chief of the *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* (2006–2020).**



*Institute for Scientific Information (ISI)*, now *Thomson Reuters*, from Philadelphia, USA (Figure 10) <sup>2</sup>. *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was the first domestic, clinically oriented medical journal that was included in the society of the most influential scientific journals <sup>1</sup>. This was an important event in the journal's history since ISI, through its basic network Web of Science (WoS), provides scientists worldwide with insights into the most recent scientific achievements. Additionally, entering the WoS ensured that the journal received an impact factor (IF), which is an indicator of the influence a journal has in its field <sup>7</sup>. A year later (2009), The Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia performed a categorization of domestic biomedical scientific journals and placed *Vojnosanitetski pregled* in the M24 category, a category of international journals (code M20) <sup>10</sup>. In 2008, the journal became available online *via* the website of the Military Medical Academy, Belgrade, ([link](#)) which additionally contributed to its better visibility and availability to interested readers <sup>1</sup>. *Vojnosanitetski pregled* received its first IF in 2011 (IF for 2010) and the value was 0.199. This IF placed *Vojnosanitetski pregled* at that moment in the 135th position among 153 most influential journals in the field of General and Internal Medicine <sup>2</sup>, and in the same

year the journal was placed in the M23 category <sup>11</sup>. The highest IF of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was recorded in 2018 (IF for 2017) and its value was 0.405 <sup>12</sup>. Unfortunately, the IF did not continue to grow. It started to decline, and today, the IF is 0.2 (IF for 2023). Therefore, one of the priority tasks of the Editorial Board in the future will be to increase the IF.

After obtaining the IF, the Editorial Board continued introducing innovations to improve the journal in all domains. In 2011, *Vojnosanitetski pregled* entered several novelties. The first was getting the new official email address [vsp@vma.mod.gov.rs](mailto:vsp@vma.mod.gov.rs). The second was entering the journal into the so-called DOI (Digital Object Identifier) system. This system allows the identification of documents in electronic form and the establishment of a permanent link to the Internet site where the original document is located. Thanks to the DOI number, articles in electronic form (as *Online First*), can be found and cited even before the printed version of the journal is published. This way, accepted articles become accessible to the readers faster. Furthermore, since 2011, only manuscripts prepared in English have been accepted for publication in *Vojnosanitetski pregled*. The exceptions are certain articles in the category History of Medicine <sup>2, 13</sup>.



**Fig. 10 – Information on inclusion of the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* into the Science Citation Index Expanded – SCIE.**

In 2012, *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* moved to the system for electronic editing of journals (the so-called e-UR) which enables higher quality of editorial policy, including checking for plagiarism and self-plagiarism (using the software *iThenticate*). Starting from July 2012, *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* has been using an improved version of this system named ASEESTANT<sup>2</sup>. It offers several benefits, such as checking for plagiarism/self-plagiarism, controlling reference accuracy, and selecting appropriate keywords according to the thesaurus of the keywords from the U.S. National Library of Medicine, which, as standardized terms, are used in all medical scientific publications<sup>14</sup>. In 2013, a request was sent to the authors, based on the recommendation of the *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors* – ICMJE, to provide a signed statement on the contribution to the research and manuscript preparation and on the absence of conflict of interests in order to ensure the transparency of information about authorship and funding and thereby strengthen ethical principles in scientific publications<sup>15</sup>. Activities in creating the journal's website started in 2016<sup>16</sup>. We hope that the journal will have a more modern website by the end of this year. The purpose of all these changes was to increase the visibility of published content and citation of published articles, as well as to consequently increase the quality of the journal.

Shortly after, at the end of 2017, another important change in the history of the journal occurred. The Institute for Scientific Information of the Military Medical Academy in Belgrade, where the Journal's Editorial Office had been situated from 1961, became a member of the University of Defence, which took over all the duties related to the Journal. As a consequence of this change, instead of the Military Health Department of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, which was the publisher of *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* from 1944, starting from 2018, the publisher became the University of Defence<sup>17</sup>.

The main thematic structure of the journal did not change significantly, but its appearance was modified for the purpose of modernization and updating<sup>1, 5</sup>. Starting from 2006 until today, the front cover has been used to publish images related to the content of that issue or images of important international dates or persons in the history of medicine (Figure 11).

From the very beginning, great attention has been paid to the professional quality of the journal. Detailed Instructions for Authors were given in 1955, with attachments regarding language and spelling (issue 1–2), and in the Impressum, members of the Editorial Board were listed (issue 7–8), including the founder of our gastroenterology department, Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Antun Gašparov and Major Zlatko Binenfeld, BPharm, one of the most prestigious Yugoslav toxicologists. The proofreaders for foreign languages and Serbo-Croatian were Dr. Ines Wesley, the author of Yugoslav Scientific Informatics, and Srđa Petrović, respectively. International standards and conventions for scientific periodical publishing have been in use. Since the 1960s, apart from the abstract in Serbian, the articles published in *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* also had an

abstract in several foreign languages (English, French, Russian, and German). There was a practice of publishing so-called thematic issues (later supplements), dedicated to significant events or personalities, like the opening of the Military Medical Academy of the Yugoslav Army (issue 3–4 in 1950), the work of the founder and first Editor-in-Chief, Lieutenant General Dr. Gojko Nikoliš (issue 3–4 in 1953)<sup>1, 2</sup>, abstracts from the scientific meeting “Serbian Military Health Care 1917–1918” (2008)<sup>18</sup>. On the 25th anniversary of the journal, a complete bibliography of original articles published from 1944–1969 was prepared<sup>1, 6</sup>. In September 2014, on the 70th anniversary of the journal, a bibliography of all articles published in *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* was released in an electronic form (on CDs) ([link](#)), and a movie was made about the Journal ([link](#))<sup>19</sup>.

The disintegration and war in the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s was a huge challenge to the survival of the journal as it was faced with a reduced inflow of manuscripts and difficulties in regular publication. In order to provide a large number of manuscripts, the *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* Editorial Board and the Publisher introduced the “Author of the Year” award in 1995. Author(s) who published the most articles in the journal in the previous year were awarded<sup>2</sup>. In 1995, 144 authors, with 83 articles, were in the competition<sup>20</sup>. This prize was awarded as a recognition of the author's contribution to the development of biomedical science and increasing of the Journal's prestige. Selection criteria for the award were established in 1996 and include the number and category of articles published in the year for which the award is assigned, and the author's order in the byline. Besides the “Author of the Year” award, since 2013, the “Reviewer of the Year” award of the *Vojnosanitetski pregljed* has also been assigned with the aim to emphasize the reviewer's important role in improving the quality of articles published in the journal. Criteria for this award include the number and quality of reviews, and their submission in due time. Author and Reviewer of the Year in 2016 were Assistant Professor Dr. Branka Roganović, gastroenterologist, and Colonel Professor Dr. Slobodan Obradović, cardiologist, respectively. Dr. Roganović published two original articles as the first author and, among 768 authors, achieved the highest score – 24. Dr. Obradović reviewed 23 submitted papers in total. That was the third time that Dr. Obradović received this award<sup>21</sup>. These two awards were granted until 2017.

Due to inclusion in the SCIE database and later obtaining of IF, the number of papers received for publication had increased significantly (between 2005 and 2007, 225–235, and after 2008, there were about 350)<sup>1, 2</sup>. A record in the number of submitted manuscripts was noted during 2015 and 2016 (about 400)<sup>16, 22</sup>. The inflow of manuscripts in the later years had various dynamics. For comparison, the average number of submitted articles in the period 2020–2023 was 270. This year (until September 15), 201 manuscripts were submitted for consideration. Number of published articles was also changing. In 2005, 2008, and 2009, 145, 160, and 170 articles were published,

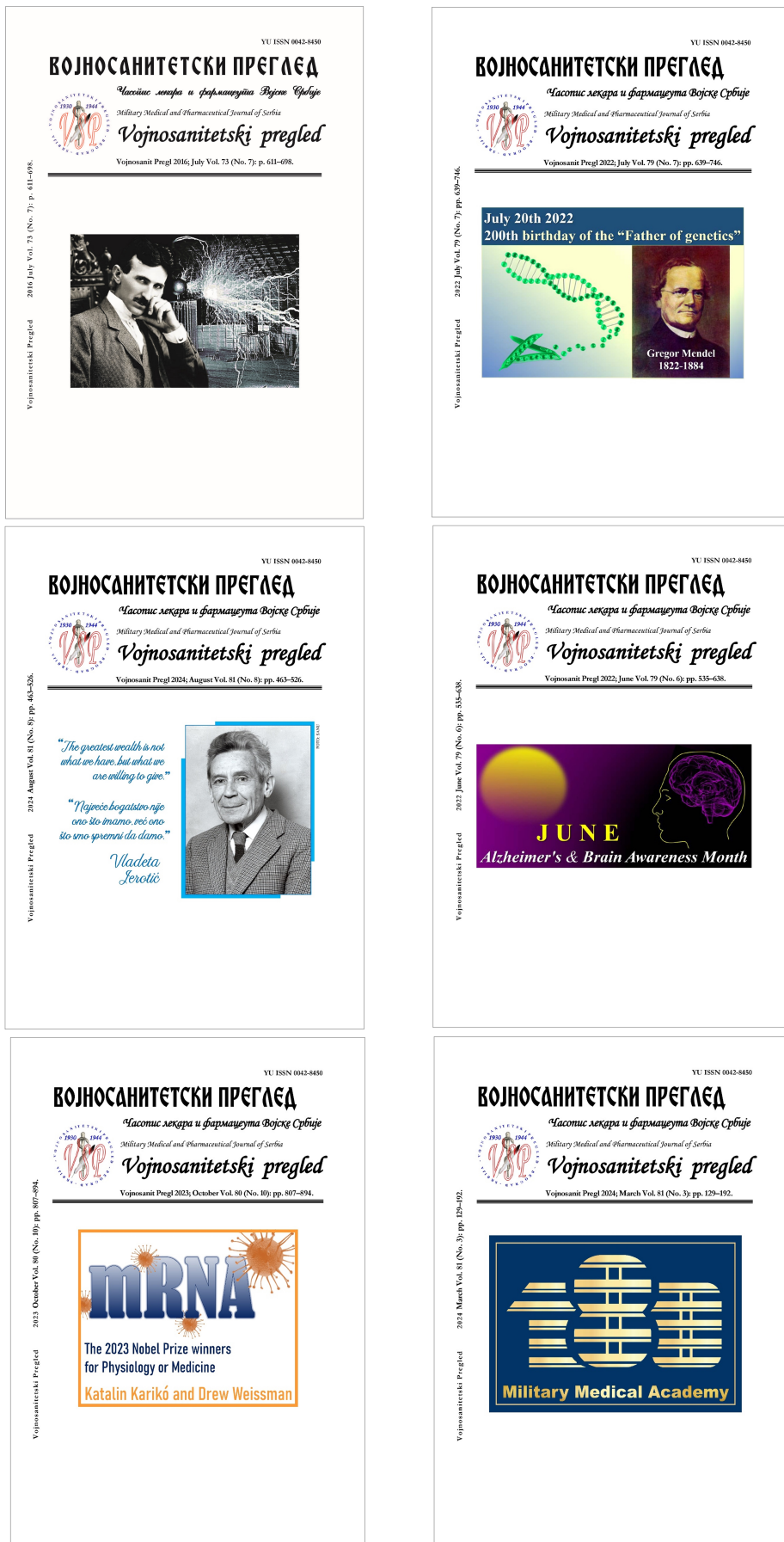


Fig. 11 – Cover pages of the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* related to important international dates or persons in the history of medicine.



respectively. Since 2011, the number of published articles has been over 180<sup>2</sup>. The number of published articles in the last 10 years (2014–2023) spans from 151 (in 2023) to 280 (in 2020), with an average number of 189 articles.

One of the most significant indicators of the journal's position in the scientific community is the number of accesses to the journal and the number of downloaded articles. According to the data obtained from the EBSCO database, in 2008 when *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was included in the SCIE database, the number of accesses and downloads of articles published in *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was 2,340, and in 2009, it was already five times higher (11,562), with a continuous increase in the coming years (in 2012 the number was 38,376, in 2013, it was 39,436 or slightly more than 100 accesses daily)<sup>2</sup>. This number of views has been maintained until now. During 2023, the number of accesses and downloads of articles published in *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was over 41,300. More than 2,800 different universities and other academic institutions have accessed our journal. In the first two places were *Consejo Nacional de Universidades* (Nicaragua) and Stanford University (USA) with 3,345 and 2,305 downloads, respectively. It is particularly encouraging that over 37,500 full-text downloads were recorded in the period January–July 2024. Universities that followed us the most in the first seven months of this year are Pukyong National University (South Korea) with 8,085 downloads and Stanford University (USA) with 3,279 downloads, respectively. We hope that this trend will continue in the future.

By marking 80 years of continuous publishing of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* we should not forget all of those who invested their enthusiasm, creative persistence, and

dedication to making *Vojnosanitetski pregled* a recognized name in the scientific community of our region. For many of them, *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was not just work but also an integral part of life. Editors-in-Chief and members of the Editorial Board managed to find the most valuable reviewers and encouraged the most talented authors, hence the published articles would always be of the highest scientific quality. Editorial Office members by knowledge, experience, and constant care made uninterrupted publishing possible. We should not forget all other members of the former Institute for Scientific Information of the Military Medical Academy (Figure 12), and the present Center for Medical Scientific Information of the Faculty of Medicine of the Military Medical Academy (Figure 13) who provided selfless assistance to the Editorial Office of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* in all areas of activity, wherever it was possible. We owe them all sincere gratitude. We are deeply grateful to the members of the publisher's advisory board of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* and all friends and venerators of the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* journal.

The value of each journal is based on the value of its authors and reviewers. Therefore, many thanks go to the authors who have chosen *Vojnosanitetski pregled* to present their professional results during these years. Special thanks go to eminent reviewers who invested their time and knowledge to *Vojnosanitetski pregled*. It is a great pleasure and strong encouragement that, in the last two years, the number of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* reviewers was over 200 annually ([link](#)). We owe special gratitude to foreign reviewers who joined the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* review team and made it recognizable beyond our country's borders.



**Fig. 12 – Institute for Scientific Information of the Military Medical Academy (2011).**



**Fig. 13 – Center for Medical Scientific Information of the Faculty of Medicine of the Military Medical Academy (2024).**

We entered the ninth decade of the journal's existence. The present Editorial Board and Editorial Office do not have an easy task. On one end, there is an enormous obligation toward the *Vojnosanitetski pregled* tradition, on the other is the vision of the future, and in between is the current state. Every effort to maintain the existing state (keeping the *status quo*) is an imminent beginning of an end. The only way is stepping forward. Moving forward is possible only if we improve the quality of published articles and the quality of work of the Editorial Board and Editorial Office.

This year, the Editorial Board of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* was expanded to 30 domestic and 15 international members ([link](#)). The aim was to have the most respected names from various fields of medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy and to rejuvenate the membership. The new Editorial Board has 4 members of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art whose acceptance speaks of the status that *Vojnosanitetski pregled* has achieved in our country. Members of the International Editorial Board are the most prestigious names from different fields of medicine and dentistry. It is not modest to say, but we believe that according to the names of its members, this Editorial Board is one of the most respectable in the history of *Vojnosanitetski pregled*.

On this occasion, when we proudly point out and glorify the undoubted successes of previous generations, we must state that there are still many difficult tasks ahead of us. First on the list of tasks will be to return to the PubMed database. The process will be longlasting and laborious but there is no other way just as there is no time

to waste. Changes are necessary, both the major, essential ones and the small, "cosmetic" ones. Before us is the modernization of the journal, bringing the journal closer to the domestic and international scientific community, and motivating the best physicians, dentists, and pharmacists to publish in *Vojnosanitetski pregled*. The constant striving of the current and former Editors-in-Chief to publish the highest quality articles of domestic authors in *Vojnosanitetski pregled* does not meet sufficient response from the authors whose work results could be cited and which could, therefore, strongly influence the quality of the journal. For this reason, the Editorial Board of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* considers its permanent commitment to encourage such authors to publish in *Vojnosanitetski pregled*. The main goal of the Editorial Board is to strengthen the international position and reputation of *Vojnosanitetski pregled*. To accomplish this aim, we expect strong support from all former and future *Vojnosanitetski pregled* collaborators, editors, reviewers, authors, and publisher's advisory board members.

When all is said and done, on behalf of everyone who is in any way involved in the life of *Vojnosanitetski pregled* today, I would like the next journal jubilee to be filled with pride and joy, for, with united efforts, we have taken a step forward on the path built for us by generations of predecessors.

Finally, I would like to ask you all to make a toast to *Vojnosanitetski pregled*, to all its achievements over the past 80 years, and to wish the journal a very successful another 80 years. Happy anniversary!

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