

Activity Report 2018–2026

Two major circumstances have significantly influenced our activities during this period: the COVID-19 pandemic and the retirement of **Professor Dragan Dankuc**, followed by that of **Professor Rajko Jović**, both of whom were key contributors to our educational activities at the University of Novi Sad.

In 2018, we organised two courses for interns and residents, as well as our traditional Summer School in Sremski Karlovci. In 2019, these were followed by two seminars, one in Laryngology and one in Otology, each attended by approximately 30 participants. The format of these events was consistent with that of previous courses and seminars, and participant feedback was highly positive.

In 2019, ORL-BAL translated the textbook ***Basic Otorhinolaryngology*** by **R. Probst, G. Grevers, and H. Iro** into Serbian. To make the book more affordable for medical students, ORL-BAL privately financed the project with a contribution of slightly more than €9,000. All 500 printed copies have been sold, and a reprint is currently in preparation. By all standards, the project has been a considerable success.

Our only educational event in the subsequent period was the Seminar and Course in Laryngoscopic Surgery, held in April this year. The course included practical training on porcine larynges and was tutored by **Professors Rajko Jović and Mihael Podvinec**, with the participation of the clinical staff. It was well received by the 25 participants.

Several external circumstances have had a substantial impact on our activities. The Department of Otorhinolaryngology at the University of Novi Sad, our long-standing host institution, has been divided between two geographically distant locations due to the ongoing reconstruction of its original building. This has created significant logistical challenges for the clinical staff and has made live surgical demonstrations during courses difficult to organise.

The political situation in Serbia has also affected our work. Following the collapse of a canopy at the newly reconstructed railway station in Novi Sad, which resulted in the deaths of 16 people, public concern regarding possible corruption in state-managed infrastructure projects led to widespread protests, including extensive participation by university students. In addition to episodes of violent repression, funding for public universities was substantially reduced, disrupting normal academic activities and affecting both staff and students. Educational programmes have also been adversely affected by increasing political divisions within academia.

Another challenge has been the gradual decline in tutorial teaching. The remuneration of senior specialists remains inadequate, and many members of the teaching staff now work part-time in private hospitals, reducing the availability of experienced tutors for educational activities.

In response to these developments, we plan to organise future seminars and courses with a stronger emphasis on personalised tutoring and hands-on instruction. We also

intend to modernise our Temporal Bone Courses by introducing virtual temporal bone dissection using haptic technology. In addition, commercially available three-dimensional printed synthetic temporal bones could significantly complement conventional training on cadaveric specimens. However, the acquisition cost of each of these training platforms is approximately €10,000, and we are therefore actively seeking external financial support.

Despite the challenges of recent years, we remain optimistic about the future. We are grateful for the support provided by the Department of Otorhinolaryngology at the University of Belgrade and wish to express our sincere appreciation to **Professor Nenad Arsović**, Chairman of the Department, and **Professor Ljiljana Čvorović** for their continued encouragement and support.