



Faculty of Medicine of the Military Medical Academy – the first 15 years

Medicinski fakultet Vojnomedicinske akademije – prvih 15 godina

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The development of the Faculty of Medicine of the Military Medical Academy of the University of Defence shares its history with the Military Medical Academy. From its very beginning in 1844, the Central Military Hospital established the education of medical care personnel. This hospital grew into the Military Medical Academy (MMA), which was fully recognized and appreciated in the field of high education and scientific research.

Today at the Faculty of Medicine of the MMA (herein-after: the Faculty), we conduct the Integrated Academic Studies of Medicine and five modules of Doctoral Academic Studies. In addition, we provide medical specialization and subspecialization programs, as well as other education programs, such as various courses, workshops, symposia, training, and continuous medical education.

Scientific research is pointed to the development of science in military healthcare, with the aim of improving high

military education, the quality of the teaching process, and the stimulation of cadets toward scientific research.

Education of cadets for the military and medical profession is the characteristic that identifies the Faculty as an institution recognized by defence structures in our country and the region, which results in the great interest of foreign armies for schooling their members in our Faculty.

The mission of the Faculty is to provide state-of-the-art education in medical sciences and, at the same time, develop independence and initiative in future military physicians, hence providing the condition for improvement of military medical care in Serbia, but also be equal to the European and worldwide experts.

With a 180-year-old tradition, MMA is one of the oldest medical and scientific institutions in the Balkans and Southeast Europe. The First Central Military Hospital of the Serbian Armed Forces was established in 1844 by the order



Military Medical Academy – old building



Military Medical Academy – new building



**Student company of the Major Military Hospital, 1939
(doctors on military service)**

of Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjevic. The hospital remained active in difficult and often wartime conditions as the First Military Hospital (1863), General Military Hospital (1905), and Major Military Hospital (1930). Today, as a superb medical, educational, and scientific institution, it undoubtedly possesses the status of a national leader in numerous medical branches in this region.

The first military medical school was established in the Major Military Hospital in 1922, with courses for physicians and pharmacists in military services. Since 1930, this hospital has served as an education base of the Faculty of Medicine in Belgrade for lectures in surgery.

The status of MMA as a medical faculty was regulated by law in 1960, which equalized MMA with other medical faculties. MMA was defined as the military medical and scientific institution of the highest level, which comprises health care, medical education, and scientific research, as well as postgraduate education – master and doctoral studies and medical specializations in the fields of medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy. At any given time, about 400 young doctors, dentists, and pharmacists attended specializations, and 500 persons from civilian healthcare institutions attended various courses annually. In this period, scientific research was conducted within over 50 basic and applied research projects funded by the Ministry of Defence. However, the researchers were also engaged in international projects in co-

operation with other scientific institutions in Serbia, the region, and Europe. The result of the original scientific contribution is reflected by an average of ten doctoral dissertations every year. Along with scientific research, this period is characterized by exceptionally high publicist activity with numerous published items such as books, monographs, and scientific articles in domestic and international journals.

Since 1952, all education and scientific research activities have been supported by the Center for Medical Scientific Information and Archive for military medicine with a library containing over 30,000 titles. The library cooperates with 25 libraries in Serbia and international institutions, including the Library of Congress in Washington. *Vojnosanitetski Pregled*, an international journal published by this Center, has an 80-year-old tradition and represents the leading journal for physicians and pharmacists.

In such a professional and scientific surrounding, logical continuation in the development of the MMA is an investment in the future of Serbian military healthcare, which commenced in 2009. That was the year when the first class of cadets enrolled in the College of MMA. The license for work was obtained by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia. In 2015, the first class of medical doctors finished their Integrated Academic Studies and were promoted to medical officers of the Serbian Armed Forces. The Faculty was registered in 2013 by the Board for



First class of cadets enrolled in 2009



Promotion of the first class of cadets

Accreditation of Scientific Research Institutions. In 2020, as an accredited scientific and research institution, the Faculty signed an agreement with the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovations of the Republic of Serbia. Although researchers from the Faculty were previously engaged as co-workers in various projects funded by this Ministry, in 2024, the Faculty was a carrier of such project for the first time.

The University of Defence was established in 2011, hence in the following years the College became the Faculty as a unit of the University. That enabled the expansion of activities such as Doctoral Academic Studies of Medicine. MMA provides the educational base for practice in clinical

subjects. The Faculty is unique for unifying the medical and military profession, and its activities are aimed toward the application of contemporary approaches and knowledge in medical science into the organization and realization of education within the defence system.

From 2009 until today, 221 cadets/students finished their education at the Faculty of Medicine, as well as 40 academic specialists, 16 registered nurses, and 73 Ph.D. students.

Considering the achievements of the Faculty so far, it can be concluded that the vision of maintenance and development of military medical education initiated by Faculty founders is successfully continued.