

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek

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Epidemija v šolskih klopeh.

Primer španske gripe leta 1918 v osrednjeslovenskem prostoru

IZVLEČEK

Pandemija španske gripe velja za eno največjih katastrof v človeški zgodovini. V obdobju 1918–1920 naj bi po vsem svetu zbolelo 500 milijonov ljudi in jih po zadnjih ocenah umrlo med 50 in 100 milijoni. Drugi val pandemije gripe je med septembrom in decembrom 1918 prizadel tudi prebivalstvo v slovenskih deželah. Obolevanje učencev in učiteljev za špansko gripo v Ljubljani in v širšem osrednjeslovenskem prostoru je eno od redkih dogajanj v zvezi z epidemijo, ki je do določene mere dokumentirano in ki neposredno kaže na veliko razširjenost influence. Delež učencev, ki so manjkali pri pouku, je bil v posameznih šolah različen, in sicer v razponu 16–75 % vseh šolarjev. Edini javnozdravstveni ukrep na Kranjskem med epidemijo je bilo enomesečno zaprtje vseh šol najprej v Ljubljani, nato pa še v najbolj prizadetih okrajih na Dolenjskem.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

španska gripa, otroci, šola, pandemije, epidemije, prva svetovna vojna

ABSTRACT

EPIDEMIC ON SCHOOL BENCHES. A CASE OF SPANISH FLU IN 1918 IN CENTRAL SLOVENIA

The Spanish flu pandemic is considered one of the greatest catastrophes in human history. In the period of 1918–1920, the disease infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide and, according to the most recent data, resulted in the deaths of 50 to 100 million. The second wave of the flu pandemic also reached the population of the Slovenian provinces between September and December 1918. Morbidity rates among pupils and teachers in Ljubljana and the wider central Slovenian area are one of the rare aspects of the epidemic that have to some degree been documented and directly point to the wide prevalence of influenza. The rates of school absenteeism varied between 16% and 75% of all pupils. The only public health measure to be implemented in Carniola during the epidemics was a one-month closure of all schools, first in Ljubljana and then in the most severely affected districts in Lower Carniola.

KEY WORDS

Spanish flu, children, school, pandemics, epidemics, First World War



S U M M A R Y

Epidemic on school benches: a case of Spanish flu in 1918 in Central Slovenia

The Spanish flu pandemic is considered one of the greatest catastrophes in human history. In the period of 1918–1920, the disease infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide. According to the most recent data, it resulted in the deaths of 50 to 100 million or, rather, three to five percent of the world's population. The pandemic reached all parts of the globe in three separate waves within less than a year. In the northern hemisphere, it was first detected in the spring and summer of 1918; the second wave spread across the globe in the autumn that same year, followed by the last wave in the spring of 1919. As regards Austria-Hungary, the influenza epidemic took about 260,000 civilian lives. Its deadly second wave hit the monarchy in September 1918, reached its peak in October and November, and subsided in December that same year.

Research on the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 in the Slovenian territory is made difficult by the lacking and poorly preserved health care documentation as well as by the complicated geopolitical situation in 1918/1919, since the epidemic erupted at the very

end of the First World War, concurrently with the disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the establishment of the State of SHS and later Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Morbidity rates among pupils and teachers are one of the rare aspects of the epidemic that have to some degree been documented and directly point to the wide prevalence of influenza across the Slovenian territory. In the early days of October 1918, schools in Ljubljana reported 1,252 ill pupils or, rather, 29.7% of all school-children. School absenteeism varied between 16% and 75% of all pupils. The only public health measure that was implemented in Carniola during the epidemic was a one-month closure of all schools, first in Ljubljana and then in the most severely affected districts in Lower Carniola. In light of the mass outbreak of the Spanish flu among pupils and students, the Ljubljana city physician in Ljubljana suspended classes on 3 October 1918. On 12 October, the City Magistrate, alongside the Imperial-Royal Provincial School Council, decreed the closure of all secondary, public and private schools as well as kindergartens until (and including) 3 November 1918. The majority of schools reopened in mid-November. However, after one month of government-imposed holiday, school-children found themselves in an entirely new world. In the beginning of October, they still sat on the benches of Austro-Hungarian schools and in mid-November returned to schools of the newly created Yugoslav state.