Studies on the COVID-19 pandemic in Bosnia-Herzegovina

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The first cases of coronavirus 19 disease (COVID-19) in Bosnia-Herzegovina occurred on 5 March 2020. The Republic of Srpska (RS) was the first entity impacted, while the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH) had its first case on 9 March 2021 (1). By 6 May 2021, 200,000 confirmed cases and 8,762 deaths were reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2). Research efforts related to specific aspects of the pandemic within the country were initiated very rapidly after its arrival.

Several studies were conducted to investigate the domestic dynamics and medical impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Arapović J and Skočibušić S, for example, documented the first two months of the pandemic from the viewpoint of the University Clinical Hospital Mostar (UCH Mostar) (1). They reported a mortality rate of 5%. The mean age of hospitalized patients at the institution was 66.5 years and that of patients who succumbed to the disease 75 years. Hukic, Ponjavic, et al. reported on the 10,090 cases confirmed between 5 March 2020 and 25 July 2020. They found a mortality rate of 2.2% and 3.6% in FBH and RS respectively, while the hospitalization rates were 14.0% and 6.2%.

Other studies looked into psychological and aspects of the pandemic and its influence on healthcare institutions. In one such study, Marijanović, Kraljević M et al. identified an impact on depression, anxiety, and stress levels of oncology staff in five institutions across the country (4). Pajević and colleagues found that several psychiatric institutions across the country ran at a reduced capacity (5).

Currently, only two clinical COVID-19 studies conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina are registered in the clinicaltrials.gov database. One is a completed, domestic clinical trial testing immunomodulation therapy for COVID-19. The other study is an international effort to investigate, amongst others, cardiovascular complications of COVID-19.

In general, it is clear that several studies have already been performed. Further research is needed to better understand the pandemic's domestic impact. Additionally, new clinical studies could provide a better insight into optimal treatment strategies.

References

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