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Helicobacter pylori, peptic ulcer, and gastric cancer in Albanian population

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Helicobacter pylori (Hp) are considered the main factor of ulcer genesis and a primary carcinogen for gastric cancer. The overall presence of this bacterium reflects the social-economic and hygienic condition of a certain population. The prevalence of Hp is higher in developing countries, but the range of infection still differs among them. Prevalence of Hp in Albanian population, based on data of the beginning of the 90's is between the highest in Europe (90-100%), demonstrated on studies on adult and children population. Higher frequency of Hp infection has been seen compared with Western populations (Denmark). There was also demonstrated that the Albanian strains of Hp are more aggressive compared to the strains of Western patients (USA). Therefore the Albanian population has suffered of a high incidence and prevalence of Peptic Ulcer through the last decades, associated with a high number of admissions and surgical complications. By the other side, based on hospital admissions, endoscopies performed, and national data (WHO), Albanian population has one of the highest incidence, prevalence and death rate from gastric cancer in Europe. After twenty years of political transition, change of economic system, and social-economic improvement, there seem to be a tendency of decrease of Hp infection in our country ($\approx < 70\%$). In the same time, there is a decline of Peptic Ulcer frequency, hospital admissions and number of operations, while incidence and prevalence of Gastric Cancer remains high, with many cases affecting young adults. We may speculate that the decline of the incidence of peptic ulcer but not of the gastric cancer on the Albanian population reflects the natural history of gastro-duodenal diseases due to the Hp infection.

Biography

Skerdi Prifti completed MD in 1986 and PhD from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Tirana, on 1995. He received two Fulbright Scholarships on 1995 and 2001 at Georgetown University, Washington DC for diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy. He has been involved in several international collaboration studies on *Helicobacter pylori* with Herlev Hospital, Copenhagen, University of Bordeaux, France and Naval Institute, Bethesda, Maryland. He was the President of the Albanian Association of Gastrohepatology during 2009-2011. He is the Professor of Medicine since 2011 at the Medical University of Tirana and Chief of Endoscopy Unit at Gastrohepatology Department, University Hospital Mother Theresa, Tirana, Albania. He is the author and co-author of one American and several Albanian textbooks chapters.

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