

## VENOMOUS SNAKEBITES IN SERBIA THROUGH 125 YEARS: WHAT WE DO (NOT) KNOW IN COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. A LITERATURE REVIEW

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In Serbia, only three autochthonous species of venomous snakes can be found; the bites of two can be harmful or fatal to humans. All three are protected at the national and/or international levels. The author found only four publications depicting small numbers (164 in total) of venomous snakebites in Serbia between 1893 and 2018. On the other hand, only in 2017, 94 persons were hospitalized due to snakebites. Yet, in a ten-year period, only four deaths were reported. Apparently, no attempts were ever made at systematizing the long-term information of this kind for the entire territory of Serbia. For other ex-Yugoslav countries, the author collected the analyses of around 4,000 cases, for approximately the same period. People often confuse non-venomous species for vipers and fear them all. More importantly, from the available sources, it could be concluded that physicians in Serbia are not always well informed about the species of snakes which inhabit the areas they work in. Therefore, transdisciplinary education of both the general public and medical personnel is necessary in this regard. Also, the collecting of information regarding venomous snakebites should become obligatory and centralized, and their analyses could be published periodically. Although envenomation can be a serious health issue, in Serbia there is no reason for panic regarding venomous snakes.

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