

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **A quarter of adults in Bosnia and Herzegovina suffer from mental or social disorder**

ZAGREB – At least one type of mental or social disorder was found in a quarter of patients in primary care centers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, shows a study published in the new issue of the Croatian Medical Journal. This rate, however, is not significantly different from rates in other countries, which indicates that the mental health of BH population is gradually improving after the 1992-1995 war.

Study was performed between November 2003 and January 2004 in 69 primary care centres in BH, and included 1285 adult patients. Somatization disorder was found in 16% of patients, panic syndrom in 15%, and major depression syndrome in 10%. Five percent of less were suffering from eating disorders or alcohol abuse. More women than men had somatization disorder, panic syndrome and binge eating disorder, while more men than women reported alcohol abuse. Twelve percent of patients had more than one disorder.

Authors of the study pointed out that the current rates of mental and social disorders in BH are not unlike rates in other countries, including ones which have not suffered conflict. For example, a study in Spain determined that the prevalence of anxiety disorders was 22% among the primary care patients. Authors conclude that the mental health of people in BH is

recovering following years of conflict, despite ongoing ethnic tensions and political and economic instability in the country.

The study was conducted by family medicine specialists Teresa Broers, Geoffrey Hodgetts and Marshall Godwin from Canada, who cooperated with their BH colleagues Olivera Batić-Mujanović from Tuzla, Verica Petrović from Banja Luka, and Melida Hasanagić from Mostar.

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